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The new season in Europe 4

The latest transfer news from across the Continent, including Juventus's decision to jettison the heart of the team who won the Champions Cup in May, and Fabrizio Ravanelli's shock move to Middlesbrough

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Open hear

In a remarkable gamble, European champions Juventus have jettisoned the heart and soul of the team who won the Champions Cup in May. Story: Keir Radnedge

JUVENTUS have taken a multi-million pound gamble with the most prestigious prize in European club football.

Holders of the Champions Cup traditionally build on a winning team in the hope of extending their domination for three or more years, in the fashion of a Real Madrid, an Ajax, a Bayern Munich or a Liverpool.

Not Juventus.

In a remarkable shake-up, executive director Roberto Bettega has thrown out the heart of his attack – Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli – as well as defensive cornerstone Pietro Vierchowod and midfield anchor man Paulo Sousa (fitness permitting). And Attilio Lombardo, last summer's big signing, was set to be offloaded to Sheffield Wednesday.

The standard manner in which to defend the European title is to add new stars rather than jettison the old ones. Real Madrid began with Alfredo Di Stefano and Paco Gento and added Jose Santamaria and Ferenc Puskas. Ajax started with the young Johan Cruyff and brought on the likes of Ruud Krol and Johan Neeskens. Liverpool lost Kevin Keegan to Hamburg after winning their initial Champions Cup in 1977, but replaced him, almost overnight, with an even better attacking inspiration, Kenny Dalglish.

But then, Juventus have a different agenda. The aim is not so much to dominate Italy and Europe in the short term as to become a permanent fixture at or around the zenith of the game for the foreseeable future.

Roberto Bettega, the fans' goal-scoring hero in the 1970s, was appointed executive vice-president with that specific job in mind. Owner Gianni Agnelli told him: "We have spent more money in the 1990s than any other club in the world but we haven't made the best use of our financial and playing investments. We have to balance the team but we also have to balance the books."

Evidence of the manner in which Bettega has accomplished that daunting goal, in a milieu where clubs are expected to maintain a high profile, was dramatically revealed just over a year ago.

Roberto Baggio, Italy's 1994 World Cup hero and one of the biggest names in the international game, was approaching the end of his contract. Bettega offered him a modest increase for a new deal because "that is what we can afford". Baggio wanted a significant pay rise. Any other club would have feared the fans' wrath on letting Baggio go. Not Juventus and not Bettega.

Baggio went to Milan, but Juventus still won the Champions Cup without him.

Bettega had been proved right.

Similarly this year. Bettega, in discussion with coach Marcello Lippi, decided at the start of the year exactly how they wanted the team to develop. Bettega was under no illusions about the likely departure of Gianluca Vialli and, as with Baggio, was never going to allow the club to be drawn into an auction for his skipper's ongoing services. Juventus's attacking future is built around the potential of Alessandro Del Piero and the technical conclusion was that he would be better served by a different style of striker ahead of him than Ravanelli.

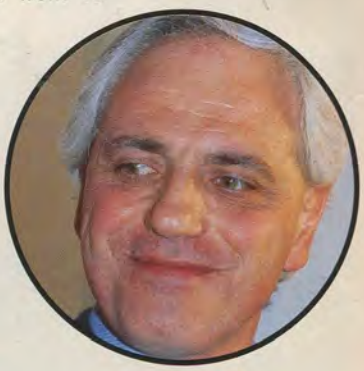
It was Ravanelli's ill fortune that nobody let him in on the secret . . . until after he had run himself into the ground for Juventus in successful pursuit of the Champions Cup and at the weary expense of his prospects of a starting role in Italy's Euro 96 campaign.

Once more Bettega was proved ruthless, but right.

The Vierchowod decision was equally pragmatic. Bettega had signed him in the summer of 1995 in the confident belief that, at 36, he had one more outstanding season in him and was the best available short-term replacement for the homeward-bound German, Jurgen Kohler. Right again.

In their place Juventus have signed Croat striker Alen Boksic as well as French midfielder Zinedine Zidane – to replace Paulo Sousa – and Uruguayan central defender Paolo Montero.

'We have to be responsible in the way we use our money to get the best deal in the transfer market. It doesn't necessarily make sense to keep a player to the end of his contract because then we get nothing' – Juventus director Roberto Bettega (right)



art surgery

Services not required . . . clockwise from top: Vierchowod, Ravanelli, Vialli, Lombardo, Paulo Sousa (circled) after the 1996 Champions Cup Final in Rome

Boksic had long been top of the Juve wanted list; it was just a matter of patience. Zidane's poor European Championship has not shaken Juve's confidence in his potential; after all, he had been playing top-level competitive football with Bordeaux right through since July last year and was mentally and physically burned out.

As for Montero, if he proves half as ruggedly inspirational as his father – 1970s star Julio Montero Castillo – then Juve fans will have no fears about defence.

Bettega talks about Juve's present situation from a position of strength. When he arrived the club were £40m in debt. They finished last season an estimated £17m in profit. His target is to redevelop Juventus's administrative and transfer philosophy at a time when it would be too easy to waste much of the sponsorship and television income washing through the game.

He says: "We live in times of great change in football but we have to be responsible in the way we use our money to get the best deal in the transfer market. We have to be aware now of the Bosman judgment. It doesn't necessarily make sense any longer to keep a player to the end of his contract because then we receive nothing in return.

"Over the past two years we have had to make a lot of hard decisions but they have not been made only on a financial basis. Everything we have done has been considered from both the financial and technical (i.e. team) perspectives. Results so far suggest we have got it right."

The summer's transfer dealing illustrates Bettega's approach. Juventus sold no fewer than 16 players worth £21.5m and bought nine at a cost of £18.4m. Attilio Lombardo cost £5m a year ago from Sampdoria, failed to make his mark after breaking an ankle in a pre-season friendly, and could move to Sheffield for £4m – a loss, remarkably, of 'only' £1m.

Tidily balanced – but Juventus know that the fans and media will be waiting to pounce on any sign of weakness in the new team. Crisis time may be just around the corner, considering that Juve's pre-season included friendly matches against UEFA Cup-holders Bayern Munich, which they won 2-1, Ravanelli's ambitious new employers Middlesbrough and then deposed European champions Ajax Amsterdam in the Trofeo Teresa Herrera, traditionally the best of Spain's pre-season tournaments.

Bettega believes that critical murmurs may help inspire the new players – including Italians such as new forward Christian Vieri – to find their collective feet more quickly than might have been expected.

He says: "Everyone thinks it is important to have what we call standard-bearer players. But that's a role which can also hide the fact that the players are no longer what they were. Sometimes it's better to make changes before you get to that stage. That's why we've made it our business to find the best young players, both at home and abroad.

"Lippi's task is to build a team which has a future . . . rather than persevere with one which has only a past."

JUVENTUS 1996-97

Name	Position	Age
Angelo PERUZZI	G	26
Michelangelo RAMPULLA	G	34
Ciro FERRARA	D	29
Paolo MONTERO	D	25
Mark IULIANO	D	23
Moreno TORRICELLI	D	26
Sergio PORRINI	D	27
Gianluca PESSOTTO	D	26
Alessio TACCHINARDI	D	21
Antonio CONTE	M	27
Didier DESCHAMPS (Fra)	M	28
Vladimir JUGOVIC (Yug)	M	27
Zinedine ZIDANE (Fra)	M	24
Raffaele AMETRANO	M	23
Angelo DI LIVIO	M	30
Alen BOKSIC (Cro)	F	26
Christian VIERI	F	23
Nicola AMORUSO	F	[illegible]
Michele PADOVANO	F	30

IN: Falcioni (G, Olbia), Montero (D, Atalanta), Iuliano (D, Salernitana), Alessandro Orlando (D, Fiorentina), Zidane (M, Bordeaux), Amoruso (F, Sampdoria), Boksic (F, Lazio), Grabbi (F, Chievo), Vieri (F, Atalanta).

OUT: Baccini (D, Cesena), Baldini (D, Lucchese), Carrera (D, Atalanta), Dal Canto (D, Torino), Sartor (D, Vicenza), Vierchowod (D, Perugia), Ban (M, Perugia), Ferronato (M, Spal), Marocchi (M, Bologna), Pirri (M, Cremonese), Lombardo (M, Sheffield Wednesday), Paulo Sousa (M, Borussia Dortmund), Cammarata (F, Verona), Giampaolo (F, Pescara), Ravanelli (F, Middlesbrough), Vialli (F, Chelsea).

Teesside special

Fabrizio Ravanelli's move from Juventus to Middlesbrough was planned six months ago, reveals Keir Radnedge

WHEN Fabrizio Ravanelli paraded the Champions Cup around the Stadio Olimpico back in May the last thing on his mind was leaving Juventus.

He had played for the Turin giants for four seasons, winning the top European trophy as well as the Italian championship, Italian Cup and UEFA Cup. He had scored five goals in 11 games for Italy and appeared as much a fixture in the plans of national coach Arrigo Sacchi as in the plans of club boss Marcello Lippi.

Then, it all fell apart. Ravanelli's challenging club season took its toll. Sacchi preferred Pierluigi Casiraghi as his attack leader for Euro 96, with disastrous consequences. Then, just when Ravanelli was saying goodbye to Gianluca Vialli and expecting to be handed the honour of wearing the club captain's armband . . . he was summoned to meet Bryan Robson.

Ravanelli was amazed, as were the fans of England and Italy, when the news leaked out. He says: "I have thought about it so many times – and I still don't understand why Juventus got rid of me. In the last two years I've scored 53 goals [for club and country] – 30 in the first year and then 23 in the second. My team-mates and I have won just about everything possible. I thought of myself as being one of the fixtures in the club. In fact, I had expected that after Gianluca Vialli's departure for Chelsea, I would probably take over from him as captain. I think my team-mates believed the same."

Little did Ravanelli know – and this is what appears to have hurt him the most – that Juventus had been talking to Middlesbrough since long before the Champions Cup triumph over Ajax.

He says: "It seems the clubs had started talking as far back as February. But I didn't know. I was kept in the dark. When I sat down to talk through the contract with the Englishmen it took us seven hours. We started at eight in the morning and finished at three in the afternoon. I've read in some papers that we had everything tied up in 10 minutes. Well, that's wrong.

"For one thing, it took me quite a time to get over the surprise."

Ravanelli has little time for suggestions that Lippi demanded his sale after the White Feather had displayed a measure of bad grace at being substituted in the Champions Cup Final. Ravanelli says: "From what I understand, the Middlesbrough business had begun before the European Final. I could have said No to the transfer but, in the circumstances that Juventus had decided I was expendable, what would have been the point?"

Apparently, he harbours no bitterness towards Lippi, saying: "You have to congratulate him on the work he has done and the success he has achieved. I had two fall-outs with him but they were quickly resolved. It seemed that if someone was to be substituted then it was always me. But we came through that."

This does not mean Ravanelli believes that Juventus's wholesale changes will not affect results. He says: "I agree with Gianluca Vialli about what's happening at Juve. Him, Paulo Sousa, Marocchi, Carrera, myself, not forgetting Vierchowod – a winning team is not just a matter of great individual talent, it's also down to spirit and morale. These are qualities you cannot create overnight."

Ravanelli remains a supporter of Arrigo Sacchi, despite Italy's disastrous Euro 96 appearance and his only failure to make a mark. He says: "I'm just sorry we couldn't give Sacchi back what all his work deserved. I wasn't at my sharpest, in fitness terms, at the start of Euro 96 and then, when I was ready, we had been eliminated. Pity, because it was a terrific squad and Sacchi had built up an excellent rapport both with the players."

How Ravanelli may adapt to the north-east of England is an open question. He has no fears. Manager Bryan Robson compared Boro with Parma and the challenge appeals to Ravanelli. His wife speaks English and a cousin spent seven months studying in England. The family will have an interpreter on hand.

There are other attractions, apart from a huge salary. Ravanelli says: "The area in which we will live is superb and Emerson, Juninho and Branco – who speak Italian – are all nearby. I like golf and Bryan Robson tells me there are some excellent courses.

"Anyway, I'm going to England – first and foremost – to play football. I consider the time after training as important preparation time, as well. So, whatever the place is like is not what matters most."

Headless hero . . . Ravanelli greets the Boro fans

PRO-FILE

Fabrizio Ravanelli
Born 11.12.68, Perugia.
Serie A debut: 6.9.92. Juventus v Cagliari.
International debut: 25.3.95. Italy v Estonia
International caps: 11.
International goals: 5.

Season by season

Season	Club	League Aps (gls)	Cup Aps (gls)
1986-87	Perugia	26 (5)	0
1987-88	Perugia	32 (23)	0
1988-89	Perugia	32 (13)	0
1989-90	Avellimo	7 (0)	1 (0)
	Casertana	27 (12)	0
1990-91	Avellino	0	2 (0)
	Reggiana	34 (16)	0
1991-92	Reggiana	32 (8)	3 (3)
1992-93	Juventus	22 (5)	11 (4)
1993-94	Juventus	30 (9)	8 (3)
1994-95	Juventus	33 (15)	20 (15)
1995-96	Juventus	26 (12)	9 (6)

Man with the money . . . Boro chairman Steve Gibson

Boro's bid for the big time

John Wardle on the forces behind Middlesbrough's push for success.

FIRST there was Moreno. Then came Fuchs, Fjortoft, Juninho, Branco, Emerson, Beck and, to the astonishment of Italian football, Ravanelli.

Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson has consistently looked abroad in his single-minded mission to turn his club into a powerful force in England's Premier League. Robson's imports have performed with varying degrees of success, but nobody can question the impact they have made on Middlesbrough's reputation.

The fact that players of the calibre of Juninho and Ravanelli are at the Riverside Stadium testify to the club's transformation under Robson, who was an ambitious and single-minded captain of Manchester United and England and has taken those qualities into management.

But Robson is the first to admit that the backing of young chairman Steve Gibson has been equally influential. "The chairman is very ambitious," says Robson. "He lives for this club and has given me every resource to help us become successful."

Gibson, who prefers to stay out of the limelight, is a lifelong fan who was in despair when the club went to the brink of bankruptcy only 10 years ago.

'I throw a challenge at all these players. I tell them it's a chance to make history' – Middlesbrough manager Bryan Robson

The gates of the old Ayresome Park were locked by the receivers and Boro looked doomed until they put together a last-minute rescue package. The bad days were far from over, however. Gates slumped to as low as 6,000 while Middlesbrough continued to spend much of their time outside the top flight.

Multi-millionaire Gibson, a former Labour councillor who runs a haulage business on Teesside, proved the catalyst. He persuaded Robson to take over two seasons ago when a new £5m ground was in the pipeline.

Robson put his reputation on the line. Middlesbrough were in the First Division, gates had dropped below the break-even level and the club shop takings were a mere million pounds.

Within a year, Robson's influence turned them into a promotion team and ensured they stayed in the Premier League last season. His determination to look abroad for players – and Gibson's willingness to back him with cash – has proved a major factor in the making of Middlesbrough.

Look at the foreign legion of talent which has trekked to Teesside . . .

Jaime Moreno was the trailblazer, a Bolivian international who arrived on trial at the start of Robson's reign. His performance in a friendly at Darlington sparked fans' demands to sign him.

Since then, the Bolivian has struggled to cope with the pace and aggression of the English game and is no longer in Robson's plans. But the protracted transfer gave Robson and his staff an insight into the complications that often surround such deals. It was to prove invaluable in the months to come.

German striker Uwe Fuchs arrived on trial from Kaiserslautern in the latter stages of the season but didn't earn a full-time contract. But nobody should underestimate the contribution made by Fuchs – his nine crucial goals in 13 appearances helped clinch promotion.

Jan Aage Fjortoft, a £1.3m signing from Swindon before the transfer deadline, gambled on Boro going up. His contribution did not match that of Fuchs, but the Norwegian stayed; the German was despatched.

The fact that Fjortoft's arrival stunned Middlesbrough supporters accustomed to less ambitious deals gives a clue to the level of disbelief that greeted the audacious signing of Juninho early last season.

The Brazilian international cost £4.5m and lit the fuse under a side installed in their new 30,000-seater stadium. He didn't contribute as much as expected while coming to terms with the Premiership, but here was the quality who would help attract similar big names.

Brazil team-mate Branco followed on a free transfer, but looked unfit in his handful of appearances. He has yet to prove he is worth an estimated £20,000-a-week salary.

Now Boro and the rest of the country prepare to sit in judgment on another Brazilian Emerson, signed from FC Porto for £4m, Danish forward Mikkel Beck and, of course, Ravanelli.

The Italian gives a clue to Robson's success in attracting such stars to a club largely unknown outside Britain a couple of years ago. Wages of around £1m a year were certainly an incentive, but Ravanelli said: "I know Bryan Robson was a great footballer and he showed his ambition by signing players such as Juninho and Emerson.

"He told me I could come here and emulate what has happened to Parma. I could win something for a club that has never won anything."

Robson admits: "I throw that challenge at all these players. I tell them it's a chance to make history. I know it was a challenge for me and it would be a personal triumph if I could win a major trophy for Middlesbrough.

"It would be an achievement to look back on with pride and all the players think the same."

If the foreign imports do make history with Boro, it will be at a price. Robson's expeditions abroad have cost him about £17m. And, while Branco and Beck were picked up for nothing, their salaries will swell the wage bill for Gibson.

So how does a club like Middlesbrough make it into the big spenders' league after being so close to bankruptcy?

Gibson speculated to accumulate by bringing in Robson, backing his judgment and finding the funding for the new stadium. The reward has been a startling rise in the club's income.

Promotion brought a £15m share of the Premier League Sky TV deal. Season tickets sales have brought in more than £7m, while the turnover of that once humble club shop looks like trebling. Sponsorship brings in £1m a season and a similar figure is raised from catering at the new stadium.

The cash is being invested in players who will give the club an even higher profile in a game where marketing is now such a key word.

For the supporters, that elusive trophy is their only concern, although Robson admits the League title is probably out of their reach at the moment.

"There's a fair way to go yet," he says. "We're not up there with the Man Uniteds, Arsenals and Liverpools – they have been building for 20 years.

"We've spent two years laying the foundations and are still learning, but the upward spiral will continue."

They are words which help explain why Robson was not interested in taking over from Terry Venables as England's coach. The suspicion remains that he may one day return to Old Trafford as the successor to Alex Ferguson.

If so, expect him to leave behind at least one trophy at Middlesbrough.

Keir Radnedge

COMMENTARY

A Real surprise from Capello

FABIO CAPELLO lost no time letting his Real Madrid superstars know exactly who is boss. For years the club had been run by a powerful clique within the dressing room. Now, with the likes of Emilio Butragueno and Michel banished on free transfers to Mexico, the balance of power has shifted.

Capello's instructions of what is, and what is not, allowed give a fascinating insight into not only his own methods but into the lax state of affairs within the six-times former European champions.

The players have been told:

- No throwing bread rolls around the table at mealtimes;
- Everyone at breakfast exactly 90 minutes after waking in the morning;
- Changed and kitted out in the dressing room 30 minutes before the scheduled start of training;
- No jokes or squabbles during the serious business of training;
- Everyone to wear exactly the same training outfit in colours and style;
- No mobile phones in the dressing rooms, at training or during ritiro;
- Everyone to travel together to and from a match; exceptions to be made only in special circumstances and then only when a request has been made a week in advance;
- No player out after midnight with the exception of the night after a match;
- Only one day off a week – the day after a game.

The players have shrugged their shoulders and buckled down. The fans think it's wonderful. An astonishing capacity crowd of 110,000 jammed into the Estadio Bernabeu for the squad's formal pre-season 'presentation' – a popular tradition in Spain but never previously as popular as that.

The turn-out, demonstrating both the excitement generated by Madrid's high-spending summer and the dangerous weight of expectancy, was all the more remarkable in that *Antenna3* screened the event live!

Laying down the law . . . Fabio Capello

TAPIE WINS AGAIN

BERNARD TAPIE has won his first battle in a long time. The repercussions could be far-reaching but will not stretch right back to UEFA's swish new headquarters near Geneva for quite some time yet.

Earlier this year the disgraced former Marseille president instructed his lawyers to appeal against a ban imposed by the French federation on his holding any office within the domestic game.

The appeal was made not to a football disciplinary tribunal but to the civil courts. Tapie's lawyers laid their evidence, which centred on a complaint that the original ban was imposed by a football tribunal chaired by league president Noel Le Graet . . . and Le Graet, when the Marseille scandal first came to light in the summer of 1993, had publicly criticised and appeared to prejudge Tapie and his methods.

That, decided the appeal judge, meant that Le Graet could not have taken a properly impartial role in the subsequent disciplinary process.

Not that Tapie is out of the legal wood. As an MP and Member of the European Parliament, Tapie had enjoyed immunity from prosecution over many of the complexities of his business dealings. Now another court has lifted that protection, Tapie will be too busy to think about a return to football.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

A RARE piece of commonsense over yellow cards has been exercised by UEFA. It's a touchy subject, of course, as the controversy following Euro 96 proved.

In previous years players have carried over single yellow cards from one season to the next. For example, if a player were booked in the Champions Cup Final and then in the first round first leg of the following term he would miss the next game through the usual totting-up process.

Members of UEFA's club competitions committee – which now includes Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein – grew concerned over the lack of a level playing field for the 1996-97 season. It's the insertion of the Intertoto Cup which had forced the issue. UEFA has decided that, so all players (except those under suspension) could start the new term equal, a yellow card amnesty was the only answer.

Not that everyone has responded in kind to such generosity. UEFA already has had to suspend two players and the coach of Azerbaijan club Neftchi Baku for unsportsmanlike conduct in the UEFA Cup preliminary round in July.

Ayidin Alekberov was banned for five UEFA competition matches for spitting at an opponent during the first leg against Lokomotiv Sofia. In the return match team-mate Rasim Abusev was sent off (incurring a four-game ban) and coach Asif Aliev reported (collecting a two-match ban) for insulting the referee.

UNLUCKY TREBLE

MUST be coincidence, surely, the bad luck with injuries afflicting players the moment they are cast adrift by European champions Juventus.

First, Juve happily waved goodbye to Gianluca Vialli just two days after winning the Champions Cup . . . and Vialli, it has been whispered, may struggle to be fit in time for the start of Chelsea's English League season.

Secondly, Juve sold off midfielder Paulo Sousa to Borussia Dortmund almost before Sousa's Portugal had been eliminated from Euro 96 . . . and Dortmund snapped him up so fast it wasn't until after the deal had been signed and sealed that medical checks revealed Sousa's suspect right knee was far more badly damaged than had been thought. The Swiss specialist who studied the X-rays suggested his entire career might be in danger.

Thirdly, Juve had agreed to shift out Attilio Lombardo to Sheffield Wednesday . . . before the player had even had time to find Sheffield on a map of England. Lombardo, of course, has never looked the same player since he broke an ankle in a pre-season friendly a year ago.

Some hat-trick!

A SAD SIGN

SPORT'S cosy self-assurance that an odd code of honour and commonsense keeps it safe from urban terrorism has been exploded, literally. First we had the Manchester blast at Euro 96, then the Centennial Park bomb at the Atlanta Olympics. Terrorism is about murderous blackmail, not about political publicity. Surely that misapprehension has now been blown out of the window for ever.

PRESSING FOR PAYMENT

WHISPER it softly but Plymouth Argyle's novel proposal to charge local journalists £10 a time to cover their matches presents a more intriguing scenario that one might at first think.

The local *Evening Herald* and the *Western Morning News* have apparently aroused the ire of club chairman Dan McCauley over their reporting of various problems at Home Park.

The club says that press passes will no longer be issued free to the local press. National newspapers are unaffected – though Plymouth are so far down the league pyramid that few national newspapers ever want to send their own reporters, save when Plymouth may get a juicy home draw in the FA Cup.

But from tiny acorns, etc.

Working journalists from the written press (i.e. newspapers and magazines) are traditionally afforded the courtesy of a complimentary match ticket to the press box for any league or cup or friendly match by every club.

It's always been a reasonable relationship. After all, football needed the publicity. Just as, in the same way, so-called 'critics' from newspapers and magazines are also afforded entry to plays and concerts for review purposes. For 'review', read 'publicity'.

Now, let's look at it another way. Football charges television (and, increasingly, radio) enormous sums of money for the rights to broadcast matches. That's publicity – and broadcasters appear to pay up happily enough because they know that their coverage is repaid many times over by viewers tuning in to their channel and (except in the case of the BBC) their advertisers.

FIFA president Joao Havelange once floated the idea of charging for journalistic coverage of the World Cup. Senior officials in the various international media organisations almost had apoplexy. Free access to newsworthy events (which include big football matches) is a basic operating expectation of the written press. But Havelange justified consideration of the proposal on the grounds that it costs a host nation millions of pounds to provide the necessary facilities at matches for the huge media hordes which descend on the event.

At present media organisations pay a deposit of around £500 per journalist when they apply to cover a World Cup or European Championship. That deposit is returned after the tournament on condition that the journalist concerned behaves himself in a professional manner i.e. he doesn't smash up the press seats or physically assault an official (which, sadly, has been known from time to time).

The deposit interest thus recovered by the host may presumably be counted as a contribution from the media to the necessary facilities.

But it won't be long before someone higher up the league gets the same idea. Football has proved highly skilled at playing off the media against itself in the past. If Chelsea – just to take a club at random – decided to charge the media for access to press facilities it's hard to imagine all the national newspapers agreeing a joint boycott. *The Sun* might pay up, for example, for fear of the *Daily Mirror* doing so.

The watching game . . . a packed press box at Euro 96

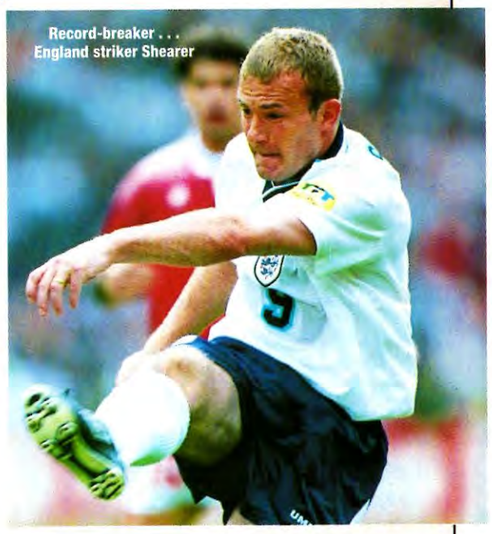
Definitely the dearest

NO DISPUTE: Alan Shearer has become the world's most expensive player at £15million.

It's the first time an English player has held that status since David Jack in 1929. It's also the first time the record has been out of Italy in 12 years. Most relieved player must be Gianluigi Lentini of Milan, who has laboured under the weight of the record label since his £13m move from Torino in the summer of 1992.

Lentini has never threatened to fulfil his high-cost potential. Relief, in the shape of Alan Shearer, may have come too late.

Some newspapers in Spain have claimed that Ronaldo's move from PSV Eindhoven to Barcelona – a fortnight before Shearer's – had broken the Lentini record. In fact, the comparative dollar exchange rates left Ronaldo a few hundred thousand pounds short of matching the Italian.



Record-breaker . . . England striker Shearer

THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE PLAYERS

£15m	**Alan Shearer**	(Blackburn to Newcastle, 1996)
£13m	**Gianluigi Lentini**	(Torino to Milan, 1992)
£12.8m	**Ronaldo**	(PSV Eindhoven to Barcelona, 1996)
£12.5m	**Gianluca Vialli**	(Sampdoria to Juventus, 1992)
£10m	**Jean-Pierre Papin**	(Marseille to Milan, 1992)

HISTORY OF A RECORD

£13m	**Gianluigi Lentini**	(Torino to Milan, 1992)
£12.5m	**Gianluca Vialli**	(Sampdoria to Juventus, 1992)
£10m	**Jean-Pierre Papin**	(Marseille to Milan, 1992)
£8m	**Roberto Baggio**	(Fiorentina to Juventus, 1990)
£6m	**Ruud Gullit**	(PSV Eindhoven to Milan, 1987)
£5m	**Diego Maradona**	(Barcelona to Napoli, 1984)
£3m	**Diego Maradona**	(Boca Juniors to Barcelona, 1982)
£1.7	**Paolo Rossi**	(Juventus to L R Vicenza, 1978)
£1.2m	**Giuseppe Savoldi**	(Bologna to Napoli, 1975)
£922,000	**Johan Cruyff**	(Ajax to Barcelona, 1973)
£500,000	**Pietro Anastasi**	(Varese to Juventus, 1968)
£250,000	**Angelo Sormani**	(Mantova to Roma, 1963)
£142,000	**Luis Suarez**	(Barcelona to Internazionale, 1961)
£93,000	**Omar Sivori**	(River Plate to Juventus, 1957)
£72,000	**Juan Schiaffino**	(Penarol to Milan, 1954)
£52,000	**Hans Jepsson**	(amateur to Napoli, 1952)
£40,000	**Juan Ferraro**	(Velez Sarsfield to Boca Juniors, 1949)
£27,000	**Ruben Bravo**	(Rosario Central to Racing Avellaneda, 1946)
£23,000	**Bernabe Ferreyra**	(Tigre BA to River Plate, 1932)
£10,890	**David Jack**	(Bolton to Arsenal, 1929)
£5,000	**Ricardo Zamora**	(Espanol to Real Madrid, 1928)
£1,000	**Alf Common**	(Sunderland to Middlesbrough, 1905)

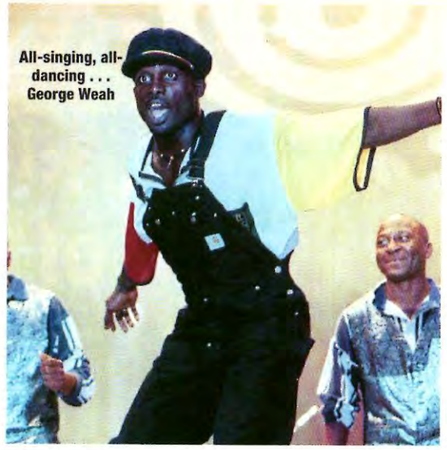
Libero

Making a song and dance of it

GEORGE WEAH made his debut as a cabaret star last month to raise money for his war-hit homeland, Liberia.

The Milan striker won wild applause for his 20-minute song-and-dance routine at the World Rhythm Festival at Milan's San Siro stadium. The show raised money for food supplies for refugees from the civil war in Liberia.

Weah cited reggae singer Bob Marley as his inspiration. "I want to do for Liberia what Bob did for his Jamaica. The new generations there are growing up well," he said.



All-singing, all-dancing . . . George Weah

Otto the Second's new challenge

THE GERMAN transfer market produced few surprises over the summer months, but one move which raised a few eyebrows was the appointment of Otto Rehhagel, former coach to Bayern Munich and Werder Bremen, as the new boss of Kaiserslautern.

Rehhagel, nicknamed Otto the Second because he was a runner-up so many times in his 15 years at Bremen, was sacked by Bayern at the end of last season. Kaiserslautern, the DfB Cup-holders, were relegated for the first time in their history last season and have turned to Rehhagel to rescue them from Bundesliga 2.

Luck on his side

CHRISTIAN PANUCCI, the 23-year-old Milan full-back, is quite possibly the world's luckiest footballer. Panucci should have been captaining Italy in the Olympics, but was forced to drop out through injury.

He headed for New York's JFK Airport to travel home via Paris on TWA flight 800, the plane which later blew up over the Atlantic with the loss of 230 lives. However, when Panucci arrived in New York, he discovered his luggage had been mislaid en route from Atlanta.

When he reported the loss, he was told of a flight to Milan later that day, which he took instead. "I couldn't stop thinking how unlucky I was to miss out on my Olympics dream," said Panucci. "Now I can't stop thinking how lucky I was not to have been caught on that doomed flight."

Fortunate fellow . . . Christian Panucci

A few minor team changes

THE TITLE for the most changed team of the summer has to go to Bordeaux. Last season's UEFA Cup finalists have sold 12 players and signed 13 new recruits, as well as hiring former coach Roland Courbis in place of Gernot Rohr.

Almost the entire team who played against Bayern Munich in the final has been sold. Goalkeeper Huard has gone to Spain's Alicante; defenders Friis-Hansen, Lizarazu and Dogon have left for Hamburg, Bilbao and Strasbourg respectively. Also sold have been midfielders Zidane (Juventus), Witschge (Ajax) and Dutuel (Celta Vigo) and forward Dugarry (Milan). Among their replacements are Jean-Pierre Papin (Bayern Munich) and Argentine Claudio Biaggio (San Lorenzo).

Dropping a division . . . Otto Rehhagel

Dirty old man

THIS MONTH sees the return of Bologna to the Italian First Division. The seven-times *scudetto* winners are back in the top division for the first time since the 1990-91 season. What with transfer deals and Serie A survival to worry about, you could be forgiven for thinking that Bologna coach Renzo Ulivieri is a worried man.

You would be right. Media speculation in Italy suggests that Ulivieri no less is also the author of a currently best-selling pornographic novel entitled *Dirty Old Men – The Reader and The Writer.*

The Guardian – *an apology, please*

WE ENJOY *The Guardian* sports pages – the Saturday football diary is one of the best in the business. Shame we can't say the same about the paper's Media section and its reporter, Dan Glaister.

On August 5, they reported that *WORLD SOCCER* had suffered a 34 per cent *drop* in circulation. That's news to us. *WORLD SOCCER* continues to gain readers and was one of the few football magazines to increase its circulation over the last year. An apology is in order.

Canny Kanu cleans up

PLAYER of the Month for us has to be Nwankwo Kanu. The 20-year-old, who joins Internazionale fom Ajax this month, was in inspirational form as he captained Nigeria, the team of the month, to the gold medal in Atlanta.

£OOTBALL £INANCIAL

Boro's nice big earner

ALAN SHEARER may well be the most expensive player in the world at the moment, but he is still not top of British football's pay league. That 'honour' belongs to Fabrizio Ravanelli, who is reportedly earning a staggering £42,000 *per week* at Middlesbrough.

BRITAIN'S TOP WEEKLY WAGE EARNERS

1	Fabrizio RAVANELLI (Middlesbrough)	£42,000
2	Alan SHEARER (Newcastle)	£30,000
3	Gianluca VIALLI (Chelsea)	£20,000
4	Ruud GULLIT (Chelsea)	£20,000
5	Dennis BERGKAMP (Arsenal)	£20,000
6	BRANCO (Middlesbrough)	£18,000
7	Faustino ASPRILLA (Newcastle)	£16,000
8	Paul GASCOIGNE (Rangers)	£16,000
9	JUNINHO (Middlesbrough)	£16,000
10	David GINOLA (Newcastle)	£15,000

Tunnel vision . . . Velez Sarsfield's Paraguayan keeper Jose Luis Chilavert prepares for action

Lip service

"This is a signing for the people of Newcastle. It shows the ambition of the club. We're not the biggest, most successful team yet, but we're the biggest-thinking team in Europe." – Kevin Keegan on Newcastle's £15million capture of Alan Shearer.

"Perhaps people will now realise why we need a 75,000-seater stadium." – Newcastle director Russell Jones, referring to plans to move to a new stadium.

"The bronze medal is of no interest to the Brazilian people." – Juninho on Brazil's semi-final exit from the Olympics.

Tarnished medal . . . Juninho with that bronze

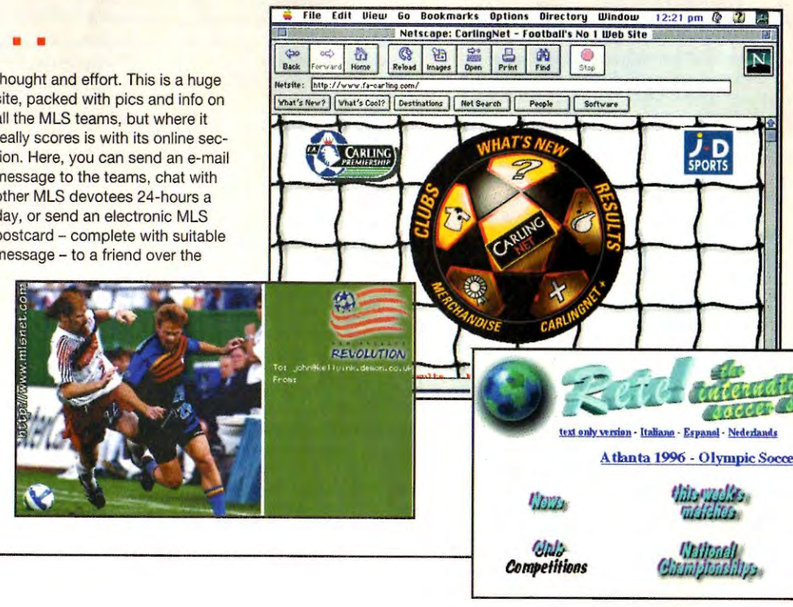
ON THE LINE . . .

WITH A NEW season about to begin, it's time to dust off your keyboard and head out on to the Information Superhighway to see what's about.

For English football, a good place to start is http://www.fa-carling.com/ – the official FA Premier League/Carling site. This slickly-presented site is easy to follow and contains just about all you could wish to know on the 20 Premiership teams. There are lots of graphics and pictures too, which make it easy on the eye while being a great source of information.

As Europe gears up for a new campaign, the inaugural MLS season in the United States is building to a climax. Visit the official MLS site at http://majorleaguesoccer.com/ for an example of what can be achieved with a little thought and effort. This is a huge site, packed with pics and info on all the MLS teams, but where it really scores is with its online section. Here, you can send an e-mail message to the teams, chat with other MLS devotees 24-hours a day, or send an electronic MLS postcard – complete with suitable message – to a friend over the Web. Definitely worth a visit, even if you are not particularly keen on football with an American accent.

But if you are still reliving those hazy summer days of Euro 96, then take a look at Rete!. This is an Italian site (in English) featuring a huge catalogue of video clips and photos which you can download to your computer. They have digitised every goal from Euro 96 for you to review at your leisure, there's a massive archive of classic goals from every competition imaginable, plus a library of still pictures featuring the great teams and players past and present. Rete! is at http://www.vol.it/RETE-_/homerete.html/ and is a great way to while away the hours until the 'live' action gets under way.



Shirt Tales

WHEN IPSWICH TOWN decided they needed a new, third strip, they decided to cash in on current trends with a black-and-white-striped outfit, very similar to Newcastle United's best-selling colours. They even went as far as to put a huge sponsor's logo in the middle of the shirt, just like Newcastle.

Unfortunately, a gremlin crept in and the home town of the sponsors was mis-spelt on the shirts. Instead of reading Bury St Edmunds, the shirts read Bury St Edmonds. The first batch of the new shirts were already on sale in the club's shop by the time the mistake was spotted, perhaps partly explained by the fact that an unnamed person (or persons) had scratched out the top of the 'O' with a green pen to make it look like a 'U'!

Perversely, the faulty shirts are now set to become collectors' items, and a member of staff at the club's shop confirmed that they have been swamped with calls from people wanting to buy the shirts, spelling mistake and all.

"Shame for Americans to see." – Rio's O Globo on Brazil's Olympic defeat by Japan.

"I'm sure people will always say, 'He was the idiot who missed the penalty'." – Gareth Southgate on that spot-kick.

WORLD SOCCER

The price of *WORLD SOCCER* goes up by 20p from this issue. This has been forced upon us by rising paper and production costs.

ATLANTA OLYMPICS

Something great for Africa

Mike Woitala sees Nigeria make Olympic history in Atlanta

MIDFIELDER Jay Jay Okocha predicted the victory that set off the biggest celebration in Nigerian history.

The Super Eagles defeated Argentina 3-2 – just as he had forecast – before 86,117 spectators in Athens, Georgia, 110 kilometres northwest of Atlanta. "It's something great for all African nations," said defender Taribo West.

No African team had won a gold in the Olympics, and although Ghana and Nigeria have been dominant in the World Youth Championships, that success had never been fully transferred to an adult tournament. The Olympic competition was played at Under-23 level, with each team allowed to bring three over-age players.

"This is not just a victory for Nigeria," said their Dutch coach, Jo Bonfrere. "It is a victory for the whole world because it shows attacking football gets results, and that is the nicest football to see."

Nigeria reached the final by disposing of Brazil 4-3, coming back from 3-1 down and scoring the 'golden goal' in the 94th minute through Nwankwo Kanu of Ajax Amsterdam, who had also scored the equaliser in the 90th minute.

The Nigerians continued to show a knack for last-minute heroics, with Emmanuel Amunike hitting the winner against Argentina in the 90th minute.

Argentina had a far easier semi-final, beating Portugal 2-0, Hernan Crespo scoring twice. In the bronze medal game, Brazil hammered Portugal 5-0, Bebeto notching a hat-trick.

Brazil had the most expensive preparation of all the teams. Coach Mario Zagallo used his Under-23 team for the 1996 Gold Cup and against the FIFA All-Stars on the eve of the tournament.

"The team was great but some of the players were thinking just of themselves instead of collectively," Bebeto said. "That's the sign of young players."

Nigeria convened only a week before the Games. "It was very difficult for me and my players to get together," Bonfrere said, "because they are professionals in Europe and they are busy with contracts and changing clubs. Before Kanu arrived in my camp he hadn't trained for five or six weeks."

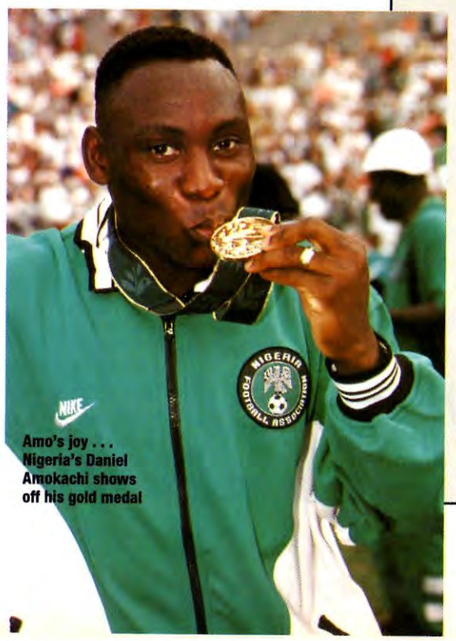
Yet Nigeria's spirited, inventive attack alleviated fears that Brazil's absence would diminish the final's entertainment. Kanu and Daniel Amokachi often were joined up front by Tijani Babangida and Victor Ikpeba, and they consistently caused problems for Argentina's highly-touted defenders. "We want to prove that there is still art in football," said Okocha, "but you have to go to Africa to find it."

Argentina offered their share of enterprising play, but the dynamic Ariel Ortega would have had more impact if his supporting cast had not been frequently occupied chasing Nigerians.

Ortega's pass in the third minute sent Crespo down the wing to deliver a cross for Claudio Lopez to head home. Celestine Babayaro equalised in the 28th minute from a Kanu cross, and Amokachi put Nigeria ahead following a Babayaro long throw. Then West pulled down Ortega in the box and Crespo scored from the penalty, thus tying with Bebeto as tournament leading scorer, on six.

Letting in goals, however, does not seem to trouble Nigeria. In the dying seconds, Amunike scored from six yards out, volleying Oruma's free-kick past keeper Pablo Cavallero. The Argentinians had left him unmarked when they rushed out of the penalty area in an attempt to set an offside trap.

The tournament drew 1.36 million fans for an average of 40,122 per game.



Amo's joy . . . Nigeria's Daniel Amokachi shows off his gold medal

QUARTER-FINALS

Big guns on fire

Argentina and Brazil turn on the style

DIEGO SIMEONE was left out of Argentina's team for the quarter-final against Spain, and his replacement, Christian Bassedas, shone in a 4-0 win. From then on Simeone was in action only as a substitute.

Crespo scored twice in the win over Spain, who were a huge disappointment and should regret not taking over-age players.

Portugal reached the semi-finals with a 2-1 'golden goal' victory over France. The decisive strike was a penalty by Calado after keeper Letizi fouled Dani.

Portugal coach Nelo Vingada said France had been the better team, while his French counterpart Raymond Domenech spoke out against the golden goal: "It's more than just tough, it's stupid. I said before the game it was an unjust method. It's sad that a game like this was sabotaged."

Brazilian legend Falcao, now a TV commentator, complained before the quarter-final that the Brazilians had yet to play a good game. Against Ghana, however, Ronaldo scored twice to cap a dazzling performance as Brazil recovered from being 2-1 down for a short while in the second half.

Ghana contributed to a thrilling match, but expended much energy coping with attacks from left-back Roberto Carlos, playmaker Juninho and Bebeto, scorer of the final goal.

Nigeria beat Mexico 2-0, Okocha and Babandiga scoring. The Mexicans played the second half with only 10 men, Dulio Davino having been ejected in the 45th minute, and only keeper Jorge Campos kept the score low.

Group A

Unlucky 11 for USA

THE TOURNAMENT started so well for the hosts, who faced Argentina in their opener. A crowd of 83,183 at Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama, saw Claudio Reyna score for the USA after 32 seconds.

The line-up consisted mainly of recent college products, and three wild-card players who have had pro experience abroad: Millwall goalkeeper Kasey Keller, Bayer Leverkusen's Reyna and Alexi Lalas, now in Major League Soccer after two seasons with Padova of Italy's Serie A.

But fending off Argentina for another 89 minutes proved impossible, and Hernan Crespo scored once and set up the others as Argentina went on to win 3-1.

Even so, the Americans did well and often tested Argentine keeper Carlos Bossio, a commendable achievement considering that Argentina fielded a back four of Serie A players.

The Argentinians, conserving energy for the second round, drew 1-1 with Portugal and Tunisia to reach the quarter-finals.

The Americans beat Tunisia 2-0, the first goal being an excellent free-kick by Jovan Kirovski, the 20-year-old Southern Californian who has spent four years with youth and reserve teams at Manchester United. The second, in the last minute, came from Maisonnueve.

Portugal needed only a draw to eliminate the hosts and reach the quarter-finals, while Keller's goalkeeping kept the US in the game. The exciting affair ended 1-1 in front of 58,012 in Washington DC, which set a stadium attendance record.

This was the 11th unsuccessful attempt by the USA to advance to the second round of the Olympic finals.

Group B

Spanish leave it late

A GROUP of no surprises: France and Spain drew with each other and disposed of Saudi Arabia and Australia.

The Saudis went home without a point but the Australians, at least, added drama and came very close to reaching the quarter-finals.

Olympic endeavour . . . Nigeria tussle with Argentina in the final

In the game against Spain, Vidmar and Corica scored in the first 11 minutes, and despite a goal from Raul, the Spanish were still behind with three minutes to go. Then Santi equalised, and Raul hit the winner in injury time.

Spain, the defending Olympic champions, also needed late goals to hold France 1-1 (Oscar in the 85th minute) and beat Saudi Arabia 1-0 (Oscar again, in the 80th minute).

France had less trouble with Australia, Robert Pires and Florian Maurice scoring in a 2-0 win. Antoine Sibierski hit the winner against the Saudis (2-1) in Miami, where a crowd of 4,615 was the tournament's lowest.

The first round, completed in six days, drew an average of 31,520 per game, compared with 6,254 at the 1992 Olympic tournament in Spain.

Group C

Italians finish last

ITALY went to the USA as European champions at this age group, but were without the fatigued Alessandro Del Piero of Juventus. Milan defender Christian Panucci, like Del Piero a European Cup winner, did make it to America but was hurt in a New Jersey warm-up game. Panucci's return home was supposed to be via Paris on TWA flight 800 (*see Libero on page 10*).

Mexico, the CONCACAF champions, put Italy on course for an Olympic nightmare. They won 1-0 with a late goal by Francisco Paencia, and only 1994 World Cup keeper Gianluca Pagliuca prevented Luis Garcia, also a World Cup veteran, from giving the Mexicans a more convincing win.

Ghana, the first African Olympic soccer medal winners – a bronze in 1992 – were upset 1-0 by stubborn South Korea, then twice came from behind to dispose of Italy 3-2. The tournament's youngest player, Bayern Munich amateur Christian Sabah, 17, scored Ghana's first goal and the winner, a superb volley from 25 yards.

The Italians did beat South Korea 2-1, but still finished fourth and last, and Ghana joined Mexico in the quarter-finals after a 1-1 draw with them.

Group D

Ronaldo hits form

BRAZILIAN coach Mario Zagallo has won two World Cups as a player, one as a head coach, and one as assistant coach. In the USA he was aiming for Brazil's first Olympic title. "We are here for gold," he said.

Japan, thanks mainly to goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, promptly beat the Brazilians 1-0 in the opener. "We are not like the dream team in basketball," was Zagallo's comment. "Upsets are always possible in our sport."

Teruyoshi Ito scored the winning goal with a easy tap-in, after Aldair collided with goalkeeper Dida. Brazil had 28 shots at goal, Japan four.

While Brazil took advantage of the 'wild-card rule', bringing over-age stars Aldair, Bebeto and Rivaldo, Japan's squad consisted entirely of Under-23 players.

The Japanese media hailed the win as the greatest in Japanese sports history. But unlike in 1968, when Japan drew with Brazil in the first round and went on to claim the bronze medal, this year's team did not reach the second round.

Zagallo's key change was to give Ronaldo – recently bought by Barcelona for $20 million – a starting spot. He scored twice in the 3-1 win over Hungary and hit the winner in the 1-0 win over Nigeria, which edged out the Japanese.

WOMEN'S OLYMPIC TOURNAMENT

Hamm leads USA to success

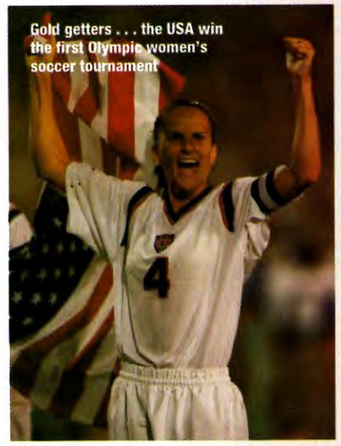
THE USA won the gold medal at the first Olympic women's soccer tournament, beating China 2-1 in the final.

In 1991, the Americans won the first Women's World Cup and six of the players who started that final also lined up against China. In between the two titles, Norway won the 1995 Women's World Cup, having knocked out the USA in the semi-finals.

The US Soccer Federation spared no expense in preparing for these Games, investing more than $3.5million in the quest for gold. Players were paid full-time salaries and had been in a Florida training camp since January.

Coach Tony DiCicco, who succeeded Anson Dorrance in 1994, had been a goalkeeper coach and soccer store proprietor but had never been head coach of a female team.

The 76,481 who saw the final, in Athens, Georgia, are believed to be the largest crowd in history to watch a female sporting event not combined with a men's event.



Gold getters . . . the USA win the first Olympic women's soccer tournament

Mia Hamm, easily the most dynamic player in the tournament, suffered an ankle injury in the second game. After sitting out a 0-0 draw with China on the final day of group play, she played in a 2-1 'golden goal' win over Norway in the semi-final.

Against China in the final she limped on occasion but nevertheless inspired the USA, who went ahead when Shannon MacMillan knocked home a rebound from a Hamm shot against a post in the 19th minute.

China equalised through Sun Wen in the 32nd minute and began controlling the midfield until Tiffeny Milbrett put the USA ahead in the 68th minute. After that China failed to muster a single scoring opportunity.

The women received far more US media attention than their male counterparts, and partial coverage of the women's final represented the first substantial soccer broadcasting by NBC, which offered 171.5 hours of Olympic programming.

MIKE WOITALA

OLYMPICS RESULTS

FIRST ROUND

GROUP A

Jul 20 - Washington DC
PORTUGAL 2 (Alfonso Martins 13, 68)
TUNISIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,796. **Ref:** M Pereira (Bra).
Portugal: Costinha - Capucho (Kenedy 58), Rui Jorge, Andrade, Rui Bento - Litos, Vidigal, Peixe, A Martins - Paulo Alves (Dominguez 71), Dani.
Tunisia: El Ouaer - Bouazizi, Badra (Ben Younes 84), Mkacher, Jaidi - Chouchane, Beya, Ben Chrouda, Ghodhbane - Ben Slimane (Baccouche 39), Selim.

Jul 20 - Birmingham, Alabama
ARGENTINA 3 (G Lopez 27, Crespo 56, Simeone 90)
UNITED STATES 1 (Reyna 1)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 83,810 (*stadium record*)
Argentina: Bossio - Zanetti, Chamot, Sensini, Ayala (Paz 84) - Almeyda, Simeone, G Lopez - Crespo, Ortega (C Lopez 70), Delgado (Gallardo 68).
US: Keller - Pope, Lalas, Peay (Vargas 85), Hejduk - Baba, Maisonneuve, Reyna, Silvera (McKeon 71) - Kirovski, Wood (Joseph 46).

Jul 22 - Birmingham
UNITED STATES 2 (Kirovski 38, Maisonnueve 90)
TUNISIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** H. Dallas (Sco).
US: Kelly - Hejduk, Lalas, Pope, Peay - Joseph, Silvera, C. Reyna, Maisonneuve - Baba, Kirovski, (Wood 90).
Tunisia: El Ouaer - Baccouche (Bokri, 57), Badra, Chouchane, Ben Chrouda - Beya, Ghodbane (Ben Younes 63), Jaballah, Jaidi - Gabsi, A. Sellimi.

Jul 22 - Washington
ARGENTINA 1 (Ortega 45)
PORTUGAL 1 (Nuno Gomez 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,811. **Ref:** M Al-Muhanna (S Arabia).
Argentina: Bossio - Zanetti, Ayala, Sensini, Chamot - Simeone, Almeyda, A. Ortega, H. Morales (G. Lopez, 77) - C. Lopez, Crespo.
Portugal: Costinha (Nuno Herlander 40) - Calado, Rui Bento, Rui Jorge, Nuno Capucho – Alfonso Martins, Vidigal, Peixe (Paulo Alves 12), Litos - Dani (Porfirio 46), Nuno Gomes.

Jul 24 - Washington
PORTUGAL 1 (Paulo Alves 33)
UNITED STATES 1 (Maisonnueve 75)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 58,012. **Ref:** M. Lennie (Aus).
Portugal: Nuno Herlander - Rui Bento, Andrade, Rui Jorge, Litos - Vidigal, Calado, Kenedy, Jose Domingues (Dani 61), (Beto 84) - Paulo Alves, Porfirio (Capucho 55).
US: Keller - Pope, Peay (Pollard 67), Lalas, Hejduk - Joseph, C. Reyna, Silvera (Wood 53), Maisonneuve (McKeon 83) - Baba, Kirovski.

Jul 24 - Birmingham
ARGENTINA 1 (Ortega 6)
TUNISIA 1 (Mohamed Mkacher 76)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,826. **Ref:** M. Un-Prasert (Thai).
Argentina: Cavallero - Ayala, Chamot, Zanetti, Simeone (Bassedas 77) - Crespo (Delgado 46), A. Ortega, P. Paz, G. Lopez - Almeyda, C. Lopez (Gallardo 67).
Tunisia: El Ouaer - Baccouche, Badra, Mkacher, Jaidi - Kanzari, Beya, Bouazizi, Ben Younes (Gabsi 86) - Ghodbane, Sellimi.

GROUP A TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ARGENTINA	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
PORTUGAL	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
United States	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Tunisia	3	0	1	2	1	5	0

GROUP B

Jul 20 - Orlando, Florida
SPAIN 1 (Oscar Garcia 80)
SAUDI ARABIA 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 28,774. **Ref:** M. Collina (Ita).
Spain: Mora - Mendieta, Corino, Santi, Aranzabal - Idiakez (Oscar 63), De La Pena (Karanka 72), Morientes (Roberto 29), Jose Ignacio - Raul, Lardin.
Saudi Arabia: Al-Sadig - Al-Jahani, Al-Khilaiwi, Zubromawi, Sulimani (Sifeen 84) - Al-Harbi, Amin, Al-Zahrani, Al-Rashaid - Falatah, Al-Dossary.

Jul 20 - Miami, Florida
FRANCE 2 (Pires 11, Maurice 76)
AUSTRALIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** M. Ruscio (Arg).
France: Letizi - Candela, Moreau, Djetou, Bonnissel, Makalele, Dacourt (Sibierski 46), Legwinski, Dhorasoo, Maurice (Vairelles 80), Pires (Wiltord 90)
Australia: Juric - Babic, Horvat (Aloisi 80), Muscat, Casserly, Corica, Vidmar, Moric, Tattio*, Agostino, Viduka (Spiteri 70). * = *Tattio sent off, 23mins.*

Jul 22 - Orlando
FRANCE 1 (Legwinski 39)
SPAIN 1 (Oscar 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,773. **Ref:** M. Un-Orasert (Thai).
France: Letizi - Toyes, Moreau, Dieng, Candela, Makelele, (Sibierski 90), Legwinski, Djetou, Dhorasoo, Wiltord (Pires 80), Vairelles.
Spain: Mora - Corino, (Lardin 67), Navarro, Karanka, Sietes, (De La Pena 70), Roberto, (Aranzabal 70), Santi, Oscar, Saenz, Daniel, Raul.

Jul 22 - Miami
AUSTRALIA 2 (Tskenis 11, Viduka 63)
SAUDI ARABIA 1 (Mohammed Al Khilawi 37)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,997. **Ref:** M. Baharmast (US).
Australia: Juric - Babic, Moric, Muscat, Casserly - Corica, Tsekenis, R. Aloisi, A. Vidmar - Viduka, Spiteri.
Saudi Arabia: Al-Sadik - Al-Khilioui, Abdouallah Zebermaoui, Al-Jahani, Al-Rachaid - Fouad Anouar, Hussein Souliman (Al-Marzouk 26; Rahman 70), Al-Harbi, Al-Garni (Khamis Al-Dossari 26) - Hamzah Idriss, Abid Al-Dossari.

Jul 24 - Orlando
SPAIN 3 (Raul 41, 90, Santi 87)
AUSTRALIA 2 (Aurelio Vidmar 3, Corica 10)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 12,050. **Ref:** H. Dallas (Sco).
Spain: Mora - Mendieta (Lardin 32), Aranzabal, Javi Navarro, Santi - Karanka, Oscar, Jose Ignacio (De La Pena 60) - Morientes (Idiakez 70), Dani, Raul.
Australia: Juric - Babic, Muscat, Horvat, Casserly - Moric (R. Aloisi 56), Tsekenis, Corica - Viduka, A. Vidmar (Lozanovski 72), Spiteri (Tiafto 36).

Jul 24 - Miami
SAUDI ARABIA 1 (Amin 26)
FRANCE 2 (Maurice 20, Sibierski 48)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,615. **Ref:** M. Archundia (Mex).
Saudi Arabia: AL-Sadig - Al-Jahani, (Al-Shahrani 76, Al-Dossari, Al-Khilaiwi, Al-Rashald, Zubromawi, Amin, Al-Harbi, Sulimani, Falatah (Al-Garni 47), Al-Dossary.
France: Letizi - Candela, Dieng, Laville, Bonnissel, Sibierski (Wiltord 63), Djetou, (Moreau 86), Dacourt, Dhorasoo, Pires, (Legwinski 74), Maurice.

GROUP B TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FRANCE	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
SPAIN	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Australia	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Saudi Arabia	3	0	0	3	2	5	0

GROUP C

Jul 21 - Birmingham, Alabama
MEXICO 1 (Palencia 83)
ITALY 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 44,211. **Ref:** H. Dallas (Sco).
Mexico: J. Campos - C. Suarez, G. Villa, Davino, Lara - Jose Garcia, Sol Pardo - E. Alfaro (C. Blanco 64), Abundis (Palencia 66), Luis Garcia.
Italy: Pagliuca - Nesta, Cannavaro, Galante, Fresi - Crippsa, Brambilla (Morfeo 64), Tomassi, Pecchia - Branca, Lucarelli (Delvecchio 77).

Jul 21 - Washington
GHANA 0
SOUTH KOREA 1 (Woon Jong-hwan 41)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 45,946. **Ref:** M. Lennie (Aus)
Ghana: S. Addo - Welbeck (Amoako 80), J. Addo, Dodoo, Sam, Osei Kuffour - Ohene (Aboagye 56), Hagan, Sabah - Ahinful, Akunnor, E. Duah.
SK: Seo Dong-Myung - Choi Sung-Yong, Lee Sang-Hun, Lee Ki-Hyung, Yoon Jong-Hwan (Chung Sang-Nam 78) -Kim Hyun-Su, Kim Sang-Hoon, Lee Lim-Saeng, Choi Yoong-Yeol Ha Seok-Ju, Hwang Sun-Hong (Choi Yong-Su 79).

Jul 23 - Birmingham
SOUTH KOREA 0
MEXICO 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 26,111. **Ref:** M. Un-Prasert (Thai).
Mexico: J. Campos - C. Suarez, Davino, Pardo, G. Villa - Lara, Jose Garcia, Sol - C. Blanco (E. Alfaro 62), Luis Garcia, Palencia (Abundis 69).
SK: Seo Dong-Myung - Choi Sung-Yung, Lee Sang-Hun, Kim Hyun-Su, Lee Lim-Saeng (Lee Kyung-Soo 16) - Lee Ki-Hyung, Yoon Jong-Han, Choi Yoon-Yeol, Choi Yong-Su - Ha Seok-Ju, Hwang Sun-Hong (Lee Wonk-Shik 35; Sang Nam-Chung 89).

Jul 23 - Washington
GHANA 3 (Sabah 14, 72, Arhinful 63 pen)
ITALY 2 (Branca 7, 44 pen)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 27,849. **Ref:** M. Garcia Aranda (Spa).
Ghana: S. Addo - J. Addo, Kuffour, Sabah, Dodoo - Hagen, Aboagye, Amoako - Ahinful, Akunnor (Yahaya 31), Duah.
Italy: Pagliuca - Sartor (Pistone 78), Nesta, Cannavaro, Galante - Fresi, Crippa, Tommasi, Bernardini (Pecchia 69) - Branca, Lucarelli (Delvecchio 46)

Jul 25 - Washington
GHANA 1 (Hagan 44)
MEXICO 1 (Abundis 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,237. **Ref:** M. Pereira (Bra).
Ghana: S. Addo - J. Addo, Kuffour, sabah, Dodoo (Baidoo 46) - Hagan, (Welbeck 74), Aboagye, Amoako - Yahaya, Ahinful, E. Duah.
Mexico: J. Campos - C. Suarez, Davino, Pardo, G. Villa, Lara - Jose Garcia (C. Blanco 62), Sol (Arellano 52) - E. Alfaro, Luis Garcia, Abundis (Palencia 68).

Jul 25 - Birmingham
ITALY 2 (Branca 24, 82)
SOUTH KOREA 1 (Lee Ki-hyung 62)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,319. **Ref:** M. Ruscio (Arg).
Italy: Pagliuca - Nesta, Cannavaro, Fresi, Pistone - Tommasi, Ametrano, Crippa, Brambilla (Pecchia 75) - Branca,Delvecchio (Morfeo 53).
SK: Seo Dong-Myung - Choi Sung-Yong, Lee sang-Hun, Kim Hyun-Su, Lee Li-Saeng - Choi Yoon-Yeol, Lee Kyung-Soo (Chung Sang-Nam 79), Le Ki-Hyung, Yoon Jong-Hwan - Choi Yong Su, Ha Seok Ju.

GROUP C TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MEXICO	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
GHANA	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
South Korea	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Italy	3	1	0	2	4	5	3

GROUP D

Jul 21 - Miami
BRAZIL 0
JAPAN 1 (Teruyoshi Ito 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 46,713. **Ref:** M. Tellez (Mex).
Brazil: Dida - Ze Maria, Aldair, Ronaldo Guirao, Roberto Carlos - Flavio Conceicao, Amaral (Ze Elias 46), Juninho, Rivaldo - Bebeto, Savio (Ronaldo 64).
Japan: Y. Kawaguchi - H. Suzuki, Tanaka, Hattori, Maezono - Endo (Shirai 75), Matsuda, Nakata (Uemura 82), Michiki - Jo (Matsubara 86), Ito.

Jul 21 - Orlando
HUNGARY 0
NIGERIA 1 (Kanu 72)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,303. **Ref:** M. Un-Prasert (Thai).
Hungary: Safar - Sebok, Peto, Dragoner, Z. Molnar - Lendvai, Szatmari, Lisztes, Dombi - T. Sandor (Preisinger 83), Egresy (Herzceg 75).
Nigeria: Dosu - C. Babayaro (71), West, Ukechukwu, Obaraku - Oliseh, Okocha, Amunike (Lawal 75) - Babangida, Amokachi, Kanu (Ikpeba 80).

Jul 23 - Miami
BRAZIL 3 (Ronaldo 35, Juninho 61, Bebeto 84)
HUNGARY 1 (Dombi 57)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 34,871. **Ref:** M. El-Ghandour (Egy).
Brazil: Dida - Ze Maria, Aldair, Ronaldo Guirao, Roberto Carlos - Ze Elias, Flavio Conceicao, Juninho, Rivaldo (Amaral 75) - Bebeto, Ronaldo (Savio 75).
Hungary: Safar - Bukszegi, Sebok, Dragoner (C. Madar 46), Peto - Lendvai, Z. Molnar, Herzceg, Szatmari - Liszts (Szanto 65), Dombi.

Jul 23 - Orlando
JAPAN 0
NIGERIA 2 (Akiba og 83, Okocha 89 pen)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 22,734. **Ref:** M. Collina (Ita).
Japan: Y. Kawaguchi - Shirai, H. Suzuki, Tanaka (Akiba 72), Matsuda - Hattori (Hironaga 86), Maezono, Nakata, Michiki - Ito Jo.
Nigeria: Dosu - C. Babayaro, West, Ukechukwu, Obaraku - Okocha, Oliseh, Amunike (Lawal 72) - Babangida, Kanu (Ikpeba 86), Amokachi.

Jul 25 - Miami
BRAZIL 1 (Ronaldo 22)
NIGERIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 55,650. **Ref:** M. Baharmast (US).
Brazil: Dida - Ze Maria, Aldair, Ronaldo guirao, Roberto Carlos - Ze Elias, Flavio Conceicao, Juninho, Rivaldo (Amaral 71) - Bebeto, Ronaldo (Savio 83)
Nigeria: Dosu - Obafemi (Lawal 47), West, Ukechukwu, Obaraku - Oliseh, Okocha, Amunike (Ikpeba 63) - Amokachi, Kanu, Babangida (Babatunde Fatusi 81).

Jul 25 - Orlando
JAPAN 3 (Maezono 40, 90, Uemura 89)
HUNGARY 2 (Sandor 3, Madar 49)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 20,800. **Ref:** M. Bouchardeau (Nig).
Japan: Kawaguchi - Suzuki,tanaka, Matsuda, Hattori - Maezono, Michiki, Moloka (Hironaga 36), Matsubara (Uemura 89) - Ito, Jo.
Hungary: Safar - Bukszegi, Peto, C. Madar, Z. Molnar - Lendvai. Liszres (Szanto 76), Dombi, Sandor - Egressy, Preisinger (Zavadsky 74).

GROUP D TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
NIGERIA	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Japan	3	2	0	1	4	4	6
Hungary	3	0	0	3	3	7	0

QUARTER-FINALS

Jul 27 - Miami
PORTUGAL 2 (Capucho 38, Calado 105 pen)
FRANCE 1 (Maurice 49 pen)
HT: 1-0. **90min:** 1-1. **Att:** 22,339. **Ref:** M. Collina (Ita).
Portugal won on golden goal in extra time
Portugal: Nuno - Rui Jorge (Alfonso Martins 63), Vidigal, Rui Bento, Litus (Beto 14), Andrade, Kenedy, Peixe, Calado, Capucho (Dani 52), Paulo Alves.
France: Letizi - Djetou, Moreau, Dieng, Bonnissel*, Makelele, Legwinski, Dacourt (Vairelles 62), Dhorasoo, Pires, Maurice (Wiltord 91). * = *Sent-off, 105mins.*

Jul 27 - Birmingham
ARGENTINA 4 (Crespo 46, 88 pen, Augustin Aranzabal og 51, C Lopez 65)
SPAIN 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 43,507. **Ref:** M. El-Ghandour (Egy).
Argentina: Cavallero - Ayala, Zanetti, Sensini, Pineda - Bassedas (Simeone 78), Almeyda, Morales (G. Lopez 80), Ortega (Gallardo 75) - C. Lopez, Crespo.
Spain: Mora - Aranzabal, Javi Navarro, Corino, Karanka - Oscar, Roberto (Lardin 56), Jose Ignacio, Idiakez (De La Pena 56) - Raul Dani.

Jul 28 - Birmingham
MEXICO 0
NIGERIA 2 (Okocha 26, Babayaro 86)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 44,788. **Ref:** M. Al-Muhanna (S Arabia)
Mexico: J. Campos - C. Suarez, Davino, Pardo, Villa - Lara, Jose Garcia (C. Blanco 6), Sol (Arellano 24) - Luis Garcia, E. Alfaro (Alvarado 66), Abundis.
Nigeria: Dosu - C. Babayaro, West, Ukechukwu, Obakaru - Oliseh, Okocha, Amunike (Lawal 86) - Amokachi, Kanu (Fatusi 67), Babangida (Ikpeba 56).

Jul 28 - Miami
BRAZIL 4 (Dodoo og 17, Ronaldo 55, 60, Bebeto 72)
GHANA 2 (Akunnor 22, Aboagye 53)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,257. **Ref:** M. Un-Praseth (Thai).

SEMI-FINALS

Jul 30 - Athens, Georgia
PORTUGAL 0
ARGENTINA 2 (Crespo 55, 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 78,212.
Portugal: Nuno, Rui Bento, Peixe, Andrade (Paulo Alves 64), Rui Jorge, Vidigal, Afonso Martins (Porfirio 58), Calado. Beto (Nuno Afonso 8), Dominguez, Nuno Gomes.
Argentina: Cavallero – Ayala, Chamot, Zanetti, Sensini, Almeyda, Ortega, Morales (Gustavo Lopez 66), Bassedas (Simeone 77), Claudio Lopez), Crespo (Gallardo 78).

Jul 31 - Athens
NIGERIA 4 (Roberto Carlos og 3, Ikpeba 77, Kanu 90, 94)
BRAZIL 3 (Flavio Conceicao 2, 37, Bebeto 28)
HT: 1-3. **90min:** 3-3. **Ref:** Garcia Aranda (Spa)
Nigeria win on golden goal in extra-time.
Nigeria: Dosu, Babyaro, West, Okechukwu, Obaraku (Oruma 83), Okocha, Lawal, Babangida (Fatusi 66), Kanu, Amunike (Ikpeba 46), Amokachi.
Brazil: Dida, Ze Maria, Ronaldo Guairo, Aldair, Roberto Carlos, Flavio Conceicao, Amaral, Ze Elias, Juninho (Rivaldo 65), Bebeto, Ronaldo (Savio 84).

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Aug 2 - Athens
PORTUGAL 0 (
BRAZIL 5 (Ronaldo 4, Flavio Conceicao 10, Bebeto 47, 52 pen, 75)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gamal El-Ghandur (Egy).
Portugal: Costinha – Calado, Nuno Alfonso, Rui Bento, Kenedy, Peixe, (Rui Jorge 56) Capucho (Alfonso 46), Vidigal, Dani, Dominguez, Paulo Alves (Nuno Gomes 46).
Brazil: Dida, Ze Maria, Ronaldo Guira, Aldair (Narciso 81), Roberto Carlos, Amaral (Marcelinho 90), Juninho, Ze Elias, Flavio Conceicao, Ronaldo (Luizao 78)

FINAL

Aug 3 - Athens
ARGENTINA 2 (Lopez 2, Crespo 50)
NIGERIA 3 (Babayaro 27, Amokachi 74, Ammunike 89)
H-T: 1-0. **Att:** 86,117. **Ref:** P-L Collina (Ita).
Argentina: Cavallero – Zanetti, Sensinl, Ayala, Chamot, Bassedas, Ortega, Almeyda, Morales (Simeone 58), Crespo, Lopez.
Nigeria: Dosu – Obaraku (Oruma 61), Uche, West, Babayaro, Babangida, Oliseh, Okocha (Lawal 46), Amokachi, Kanu, Ikpeba (Amunike 72).

LEADING SCORERS

6 .....Bebeto (Bra), Crespo (Arg).
5 .....Ronaldo (Bra).
4 .....Branca (Ita).
3 .....Maurice (Fra), Flavio Conceicao (Bra), Kanu (Nig). Lopez (Arg).
2.....Sabah (Gha), Ortega (Arg), Maisunneuve (USA), Raul (Spa), Maezono (Jap), Okocha, Babayaro (Nig), Martins (Por).

SQUADS

GROUP A

USA
1 Kasey Keller (Millwall, Eng)
2 Matt McKeon (Kansas City Wiz)
3 Billy Walsh (Univ. Virgina)
4 Eddie Pope (Washington DC United)
5 Clint Peay (Washington DC United)
6 Alexi Lalas (New England Revolution)
7 Imad Baba (New England Revolution)
8 Jovan Korovski (Man Utd, Eng)
9 AJ Wood (NY/NJ MetroStars)
10 Claudio Reyna (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger)
11 Miles Joseph (NY/NJ MetroStars)
12 Brandon Pollard (Dallas Burn)
13 Frankie Hejduk (Tampa Bay Mutiny)
14 Brian Maisonneuve (Colombus Crew)
15 Nelson Vargas (Tampa Bay Mutiny)
16 Rob Smith (Columbus Crew)
17 Damian Silvera (NY/NJ MetroStars)
18 Chris Snitko (Kansas City Wiz)

ARGENTINA
1 Carlos Bossio (Estudiantes)
2 Roberto Ayala (Napoli, Ita)
3 Jose Chamot (Lazio, Ita)
4 Javier Zanetti (Internazionale, Ita)
5 Matias Almeyda (River Plate)
6 Roberto Sensini (Parma, Ita)
7 Claudio Lopez (Racing Club)
8 Diego Simeone (At. Madrid, Spa)
9 Hernan Crespo (Parma, Ita)
10 Ariel Ortega (River Plate)
11 Hugo Morales (Lanus)
12 Pablo Cavallero (Velez Sarsfield)
13 Hector Pineda (Huracan)
14 Pablo Paz (Banfield),
15 Christian Bassedas (Velez Sarsfield)
16 Gustavo Lopez (Real Zaragoza, Spa)
17 Marcelo Delgado (Racing Club)
18 Marcelo Gallardo (River Plate)

TUNISIA
1 Chokri El Ouaer (Esperance)
2 Imed Ben Younes (ES Sahel)
3 Lotfi Baccouche (ES Sahel)
4 Khaled Badra (Esperance)
5 Mohamed Mkacher (ES Sahel)
6 Ferid Chouchane (ES Sahel)
7 Maher Kanzari (Stade Tunisien)
8 Zoubeir Beya (ES Sahel)
9 Hassen Gabsi (Esperance)
10 Kaies Ghodbane (ES Sahel)
11 Adel Sellimi (Club Africain)
12 Marouane Bokri (Esperance)
13 Riadh Bouazizi (ES Sahel)
14 Sabri Jaballah (AS Marsa)
15 Radhi Jaidi (Esperance)
16 Hamdi Baba
17 Tarek Ben Chrouda (AS Marsa)
18 Medhi Ben Silmane (AS Marsa)

PORTUGAL
1 Paulo Costinha (Sporting)
2 Daniel Kenedy (Paris SG, Fra)
3 Rui Bento (Boavista)
4 Emilio Peixe (Sporting)
5 Roberto Beto (Sporting)
6 Jose Andrade (Sporting)
7 Jose Dominguez (Sporting)
8 Nuno Capucho (Vitoria Guimaraes)
9 Paulo Alves (Sporting)
10 Alfonso Martins (Sporting)
11 Rui Jorge (FC Porto)
12 Nuno Herlander (Vitoria Guimaraes)
13 Jose Vidigal (Sporting)
14 Jose Calado (Benfica)
15 Nuno Gomes (Boavista)
16 Hugo Porfirio (Sporting)
17 Carlo Litos (Boavista)
18 Dani (Sporting)

GROUP B

SPAIN
1 Juan Luis Mora (Oviedo)
2 Gaizka Mendieta (Valencia)
3 Agustin Aranzabal (Real Sociedad)
4 Javi Navarro (Valencia)
5 Santi (Atletico Madrid)
6 Oscar (Barcelona)
7 Raul (Real Madrid)
8 Roberto (Atletico Madrid)
9 Sergio Corino (Merida)
10 Jose Ignacio (Valencia)
11 Inaki Idiakez (Real Sociedad)
12 Karanka (Athletic Bilbao)
13 Jorge Aizkorreta (Athletic Bilbao)
14 Fernando Morientes (Real Zaragoza)
15 Ivan De la Pena (Barcelona)
16 Jordi Lardin (Espanyol)
17 Sietes (Valencia)
18 Dani (Real Zaragoza)

SAUDI ARABIA
1 Hussein Al-Sadig
2 M ohamed Al-Jahni
3 Abdullah Al-Shahrani
4 Mohamed Al-Khilaiwi
5 Abdulla Zebermawi
6 Fuad Anwar Amin
7 Khamis Al-Zahrani
8 Hussain Suliman
9 Hamzeh Saeed Falatah
10 Ibrahim Al-Harbi
11 Obied Al-Dossary
12 Hussain Al-Masaari
13 Khalid Al-Rashaid
14 Abdulla Al-Karat
15 Abdul Al-Marzoug
16 Khamis Al-Dossari
17 Abdul Rahman Sifein
18 Rashed Al-Megrin

FRANCE
1 Lionel Letizi (Metz)
2 Martin Djetou (Monaco)
3 Jerome Bonnissel (Montpellier)
4 Florent Laville (Lyon)
5 Patrick Moreau (Bastia)
6 Patrick Vieira (Milan, Ita)
7 Claude Makelele (Nantes)
8 Vikash Dhorasoo (Le Havre)
9 Florian Maurice (Lyon)
10 Antoine Sibierski (Auxerre)
11 Robert Pires (Metz)
12 Geoffray Toyes (Bordeaux)
13 Vincent Candela (Guingamp)
14 Olivier Dacourt (Strasbourg)
15 Tony Vairelles (Lens)
16 Vincent Fernandez (Paris SG)
17 Sylvain Wiltord (Rennes)
18 Sylvain Legwinski (Monaco)

AUSTRALIA
1 Paul Agostino (Bristol City, Eng)
2 Ross Aloisi (West Adelaide)
3 Mark Babic (Sydney Utd)
4 Luke Casserley (Marconi-Fairfield)
5 Steve Corica (Wolves, Eng)
6 Robert Enes (Sydney Utd)
7 Hayden Foxe (Ajax, Hol)
8 Steven Horvat (Hajduk Split, Cro)
9 Frank Juric (Melbourne Knights)
10 Goran Lozanovski (Adelaide City)
11 Ante Moric (Sydney Utd)
12 Kevin Muscat (South Melbourne)
13 Michael Petkovic (South Melbourne)
14 Joseph Spiteri (Melbourne Knights)
15 Daniel Tiatto (Melbourne Knights)
16 Peter Tsekenis (UTS Olympic)
17 Aurelio Vidmar (Feyenoord, Hol)
18 Mark Viduka (NK Croatia, Cro).

GROUP C

GHANA
1 Simon Addo (Ghapoha)
2 Richard Kingston (Olympics)
3 Osei Kuffour (Bayern Munich, Ger)
4 Afo Duodo (Kalamata, Gre)
5 Jacob Nettey (Hearts of Oak)
6 Stephen Baidoo (Goldfields)
7 Christian Sabah (Bayern Munich, Ger)
8 Wallam Yahaya (Bor. Dortmund, Ger)
9 Osei Kuffour (Dwarfs)
10 Ebenezer Hagan (Kalamata, Gre)
11 Nii Artee Welbeck
12 Richard Obimpeh (Asante Kotoko)
13 Ohene Kennedy (Al-Nasr, Sau)
14 Augustine Arhinful (Kreins, Swi)
15 Charles Akunnor (Fortuna Koln)
16 Emmanuel Duah (Eskisehirspor, Tur)
17 Prince Amoako (Asante Kotoko)
18 Joe Addo (FVS Frankfurt, Germany)

SOUTH KOREA
1 Seo Dong Myung (Ulsan Horang-1)
2 Park Choong Kyoon (Suwon Blue Wings)
3 Choi Sung Yong (Korea Univ.)
4 Lee Sang Hun (Dongkuk Univ.)
5 Lee Kyung Soo (Suwon Blue Wings)
6 Lee Ki Hyung (Suwon Blue Wings)
7 Lee Woo Young
8 Yoon Jong Hwan (Puchon Elephants)
9 Chung Sam Nam (Yonsei Univ.)
10 Choi Young Su (Lucky Goldstar Cheetahs)
11 Lee Won Shik (Puchon Elephants)
12 Lee Dae Hee (Aju Univ)
13 Kim Hyun Su (Chonnam Dragons)
14 Kim Sang Hoon (Ulsan Horang-1)
15 Lee Lim Saeng
16 Choi Yoon Yeol (Kyunghee Univ.)
17 Ha Seok Ju
18 Hwang Sun Hong (Pohang Atoms)

ITALY
1 Gianluca Pagliuca (Internazionale)
2 Christian Panucci (Milan)
3 Alessandro Nesta (Lazio)
4 Fabio Cannavaro (Parma)
5 Fabio Galante (Genoa)
6 Salvatore Fresi (Internazionale)
7 Raffaele Ametrano (Udinese)
8 Massimo Crippa (Parma)
9 Marco Branca (Internazionale)
10 Massimo Brambilla (Parma)
11 Marco Delvecchio (Roma)
12 Gianluigi Buffon (Parma)
13 Alessandro Pistone (Internazionale)
14 Damiano Tommasi (Roma)
5 Fabio Pecchia (Napoli)
16 Domenico Morfeo (Atalanta)
17 Cristiano Lucarelli (Cosenza)
18 Antonio Bernardini (Roma)

MEXICO
1 Oswaldo Sanchez (Club America)
2 Claudio Suarez (Guadalajara)
3 David Oteo (UNAM)
4 German Villa (Club America)
5 Duilio Davino (UAG)
6 Raul Rodrigo Lara (Club America)
7 Rafael Garcia (UNAM)
8 Manuel Sol (Atlante)
9 Jorge Campos (Los Angeles Galazy, USA)
10 Luis Garcia (Club America)
11 Cuauhtemac Blanco (Club America)
12 Francisco Sanchez (Club America)
13 Pavel Pardo (UAG)
14 Edson Alvarado (Necaxa)
15 Jesus Arellano (Monterrey)
16 Enrique Alfaro (Toluca)
17 Francisco Palencia (Cruz Azul)
18 Juan Manuel Abundis (Toluca)

GROUP D

BRAZIL
1 Dida (Cruzeiro)
2 Ze Maria (Flamengo)
3 Aldair (Roma, Ita)
4 Ronaldo Guira (At. Mineiro)
5 Flavio Conceicao (Palmeiras)
6 Roberto Carlos (Internazionale, Ita)
7 Bebeto (Flamengo)
8 Amaral (Palmeiras)
9 Juninho (Middlesbrough, Eng)
10 Rivaldo (Parma, Ita)
11 Savio (Flamengo)
12 Danrlei (Gremio)
13 Narciso (Santos)
14 Andre Luis (Sao Paulo)
15 Ze Elias (Corinthians)
16 Beto (Botafogo)
17 Luizao (Palmeiras)
18 Ronaldo (PSV, Hol)

JAPAN
1 Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi (Yok. Marinos)
2 Hiroyuki Shirai (Shimizu S-Pulse)
3 Hideto Suzuki (Jubilo Iwata)
4 Yuji Hironaga (Verdy Kawasaki)
5 Makoto Tanaka (Jubilo Iwata)
6 Toshihiro Hattori (Jubilo Iwata)
7 Masakiyo Maezano (Yok. Flugels)
8 Teruyoshi Ito (Shimizu S-Pulse)
9 Shoji Jo (JEF Utd Ichihara)
10 Akihiro Endo (Yokohama Marinos)
11 Shigeru Moricka (Gamba Osaka)
12 Kenichi Uemura (Sanfrecce)
13 Naoki Matsuda (Yokohama Marinos)
14 Hidetoshi Nakata (Bellmare)
15 Tadahiro Akiba (JEF Utd Ichihara)
16 Yoshika Matsubara (Shimizu S-Pulse)
17 Ryuji Michiki (Sanfrecce Hiroshima)
18 Takashi Shimoda (Sanfrecce Hiroshima)

HUNGARY
1 Lajos Szucs (UTE)
2 Janos Hrutka (Ferencvaros)
3 Vilmos Sebok (UTE)
4 Janos Matyus (Kispest-Honved)
5 Zoltan Peto (DVSC)
6 Miklos Lendvai (ZTE)
7 Tibor Dombi (DVSC)
8 Tamas Sandor (DVSC)
9 Karoly Szanto (UTE)
10 Krisztian Lisztes (Ferencvaros)
11 Gabor Egressy (UTE)
12 Zoltan Molnar (BVSC Dreher)
13 Csaba Madar (DVSC)
14 Gabor Zavadszky (Ferencvaros)
15 Sandor Preisinger (ZTE)
16 Csaba Szatmari (DVSC)
17 Attila Dragoner (Stadler)
18 Szabolcs Safar (Vasas)

NIGERIA
1 Emmanuel Babayaro (Plateau Utd)
2 Celestine Babayaro (Anderlecht, Bel)
3 Taribo West (Auxerre, Fra)
4 Nwankwo Kanu (Ajax, Hol)
5 Uche Ukechukwu (Fenerbahce, Tur)
6 Emmanuel Amunike (Sporting, Por)
7 Tijani Babangida (Roda JC, Hol)
8 Wilson Oruma (Lens, Fra)
9 Teslim Fatusi Babatunde (Servette, Swi)
10 Jay Jay Okocha (Fenerbahce, Tur)
11 Victor Ikpeba (Monaco, Fra)
12 Abiodun Obafemi (Toulouse, Fra)
13 Garba Lawal (Esperance, Tun)
14 Daniel Amokachi (Everton, Eng)
15 Sunday Oliseh (Koln, Ger)
16 Kingsley Obiekwu (GA Eagles, Hol)
17 Mobi Obaraku (Turnhout, Bel)
18 Dosu Joseph (Julius Berger).

THE WORLD SOCCER INTERVIEW

Don't look in anger

Jorge Valdano, sacked by Real Madrid earlier this year and revelling in a new role in the media, talks to Phil McVie

JORGE VALDANO, a strong critic of his fellow coaches at Euro 96 and what he calls "the dictatorship of the blackboard", is bemused by developments at Real Madrid since they sacked him earlier this year.

The former Real forward, who helped Argentina win the World Cup in Mexico in 1986, was denied funds to rebuild the team he guided to the Spanish championship in May 1995.

The few changes Valdano did make failed, and not long after Rafael Mendoza – the man who brought the Argentinian back to Real from Tenerife – resigned as club chairman. Valdano was sacked by new president Lorenzo Sanz.

"I don't have to try very hard to recall my time at Real Madrid," Valdano said.

"The first thought that occurs to me, because it is so remarkable, so exceptional, is that I've never seen such an ambitious project," he said looking at the start of the Fabio Capello era at Real, where nearly £20million has been spent on new players over the summer.

"Throughout my life I've seen Real sign important coaches who arrived accompanied by two or three important players and two or three complementary players, but this time it's all about a world selection.

"They're saying: Where are the best in the world in each position, no matter what they cost? Let's start a new project which is on a level with the height and greatness of Real Madrid.

"As long as they don't finish by demanding too much of it too soon, because that does condition the product."

Valdano said major changes where necessary at Real after winning the championship. "At the end of that season, I was convinced Real Madrid had to make a complete overhaul and this could only be done by going into the market decisively to buy players of the category of Figo, Guerrero, Seedorf, Suker, Mijatovic – all players I had watched.

"But the club was mixed up in a political war and had serious economic problems and we lost a beautiful opportunity. It wasn't possible, yet six months later it all turns out to be possible and I look at it with the perplexity that many things in football provoke in me."

Valdano, without the reinforcements he wanted, promoted youngsters, chiefly striker Raul Gonzalez.

"Talent is primordial, a good idea is always less than a good player, but at the same time I believe the only thing that stands the test of time is organisation, and in that respect Real Madrid have made many concessions in recent times.

"Either they correct that institutional deficit or they'll have problems as big as the players they have bought."

'We are so careful about the insignificant details that we lose sight of the essential . . . trainers again believe in players who can turn the screw and the players accept this with a docility that depresses me'

The new Real team would appear not to have room even for talented Argentina World Cup midfielder Fernando Redondo, who Valdano took with him to Real when he moved from Tenerife.

"There's no place for him and, in fact, players they have contracted in the last few weeks are international talents that could cancel each other out."

Despite the disappointment of leaving Madrid, Valdano does not indulge in self-pity or mope about waiting for another coaching job to fill the void.

A widely read man, he indulges his second, more recent passion for writing with a column in the prestigious Spanish daily *El Pais*. He has also written for *El Mundo Deportivo* of Barcelona and during Euro 96 worked as a radio commentator.

"I have the capacity never to feel beaten," Valdano was quoted as saying in his 1994 biography *Suenos de Futbol* (Football Dreams) when he was still coach of Tenerife. "I always make my escapes in a forward direction." Now he qualifies that by saying "but not too far".

"Leaving Real Madrid was only five months ago, but it seems like a century. When I finish something I turn the page and don't even transform it into nostalgia.

"It's a closed chapter which I interpret as valuable for my knowledge and an honour in personal terms, but I have a strange inability to recall, perhaps it's a kind of defence mechanism. When I try to recall memories, good and bad, I have to make a big, almost titanic effort, for example, to feel a world champion. I've not even watched those [1986 World Cup] matches on video.

"I have a great capacity to dream, but only about immediate events. If you asked me what my plans were you'd put me on the spot. I don't know how to think long term.

"It could be one of the perversions of living in a competitive manner for so long. When I was a footballer I aspired to great things and I had an almost delirious confidence in my possibilities, but I couldn't put a jersey (colours) to my future."

Valdano, who will be 41 in October, has lived more than half his life in Spain, having left Newell's Old Boys of Rosario – near his native Las Parejas in Argentina's Santa Fe province – at the age of 19 and with just one international cap under his belt.

He joined Second Division Alaves, the launch of a fine career with Real Zaragoza and later Real Madrid, with whom he was a champion of Spain.

Retirement as a player was forced on him slightly prematurely by hepatitis and a first spell in the media was followed by his debut coaching job with Tenerife, where ironically his team ruined Real Madrid's title chances in two successive seasons on the final day of the championship.

"Now I feel something similar. I feel good, sure in this new environment [of journalism], but events are developing and I'm enjoying them as I go along.

"I've had many offers to coach, but none which have filled me with enthusiasm, from many countries." He would not say which clubs had shown interest in him, not even from Argentina, where he could conceivably return.

Valdano was disillusioned by most of the football – on the whole defensive and lacking in fantasy – seen at the European championship finals in June, and held the national team coaches responsible.

In his column in *El Pais*, midway through the

Down Mexico way . . . Valdano in the 1986 World Cup Final

ok back

tournament he wrote: "In every match we are seeing two teams who fight incessantly for the ball and when they have it they kick it anywhere."

Citing his mentor Cesar Luis Menotti, Valdano said: "Menotti explains it like this: 'It is like two kids fighting for a toy – it's mine; no, it's mine – and when one of them gets it he throws it out of the window.' "

He elaborated: "In the first round, we saw very inhibited teams, too conditioned to keeping their order. In the second, the big talents began to break loose and do great things, like Gascoigne against Scotland, like Suker's superb performance against Denmark.

"The trainers are more important than the players. I think it's an extremely dangerous perversion.

"The dictatorship of the blackboard means that production-line players, systematic players become indispensable and that players who are different, who the people like and who can change a match with something unexpected, have ever greater difficulties adapting.

"These kind of players have increasingly less freedom to create. They are one of the threats to an order whose vocation is to prohibit and which considers imagination as subversive.

"This is why Ginola, Cantona, de la Pena, Baggio are left out and this is grave, having occurred in the national teams of the most important countries."

"We trainers are so careful about the insignificant details that we lose sight of the essential."

He said football went in cycles and that this problem arose in the 1960s when everyone feared that the game was in great danger, but then players took control again, perhaps through the influence of great players like Platini, Zico, Maradona, Van Basten.

"New trainers believe again in players who can turn the screw and the players accept this with a docility that frightens and depresses me.

"There are some coaches who I call scientifists. Many of them are very intelligent, but they have committed a grave contradiction.

"If they have a very different player in their country they despise him and don't even bring him to the championship. But if a different player of similar characteristics plays in the rival team, then they put three markers on him. It's a bit schizophrenic."

Then, with a smile, he adds: "At least it enables us to keep talking about football, which seems to be a subject of limitless possibilities of reflection."

Valdano said he did not know too much about the current Argentina side coached by his World Cup team-mate Daniel Passarella. "It seems to be a very solid team and dynamic in attack with a variety of attacking options, a privilege others do not have.

"Italy leave Chiesa on the bench. Spain didn't bring Raul. Cantona isn't here.

"Few teams in Euro 96 dared play with two forwards, almost all went out with one and a half and others with just one, who was left very isolated. Those who played with three, Bulgaria and Switzerland, didn't have a fourth midfielder.

"The motor of the 0-0 revolution is fear and the trainer transmits it to the players. That's the nasty conclusion of this championship. It's very bad news that the teams who dared to take the initiative have lost or had no more than equal possibilities of winning than those who gave up the initiative.

"Amid such equality, the matches were modified more by the referee or luck than the players. The referees were, in general, political and localist. They helped England and the biggest teams, except in the final when the referee committed a big mistake in the Czech Republic's favour."

But Valdano said the biggest responsibility fell squarely on the shoulders of his fellow coaches and their negative approach. Apart from Turkey, Switzerland and Scotland, any side could have won the tournament.

But Valdano took his hat off to the Germans, his rivals in the heart-stopping 1986 World Cup Final. "They are programmed to win championships," he said.

Back from the dead

Lesley Hussell charts the return of Olympique Marseille to the French First Division

THEY WERE written off as bankrupt cheating has-beens, but now Olympique Marseille are on the threshold of an extraordinary return to big-time football.

After two gloomy years of penance they are back in the French First Division, and should be a real force – possibly even European contenders again – in the new season.

Whereas the 1993 Champions Cup-winners spiralled to disaster after being caught out in a bribery scandal, the future now looks rosy.

A big cash injection from sportswear giants adidas means Marseille have an annual budget of £16million for the next five years. The team sheet once more includes impressive names such as French international Reynald Pedros and other Euro 96 stars: balding Bulgarian midfielder Yordan Lechkov and German goalkeeper Andreas Kopke. In addition Italian Lorenzo Minotti has been brought in after nine seasons with Parma and Brazilian defender Adilson joins from Gremio. Domestic players have not been overlooked. Forward Xavier Gravelaine has been signed from Paris St Germain and midfielder Eric Roy joins from Lyon.

It is all a vivid contrast to the austerity of the post-Tapie years, when good players were sold in a vain attempt to balance the books and OM scouts could look no further than free transfers and untried youngsters for new players.

The Stade Velodrome may be half rubble today, but it will be a fine ground by the time it is rebuilt to host one of the semi-finals of the 1998 World Cup.

'The club is being reborn. We need to reclaim our old place quickly' – Marseille coach Gerard Gili

The irony could not be sweeter, for Tapie bought adidas in a blaze of publicity, only to sell it at a loss as his empire crashed. Now the sportswear firm is pulling OM out of the mess into which his scurrilous scheming dumped it and the firm is being feted as the saviour of one of France's greatest clubs.

Meanwhile, the only fixtures Bernard Tapie cares about this season are his dates with judges as he struggles to stay out of jail. The pop-singer-turned-tycoon former club president will spend his time appealing against prison terms already handed down for corruption and tax fraud, and preparing his defence for another blockbuster trial next year.

In a shrewd move, adidas has not bought the club but is spearheading efforts to put together a take-over consortium. Yet the company hopes to reap lucrative benefits from close links with one of the big names in football in the run-up to the World Cup.

An £8m contract to kit out 30 First and Second Division clubs already has been agreed with the French League, and managing director Robert-Louis Dreyfus is lining up a marketing blitz and dreaming of doubling the 600,000 pairs of boots he sells in the country each year.

And his glee is heightened by the fact that he beat off two of his strongest rivals to move in on OM: Nike, who bid with Mark McCormack's International Management Group, and Reebok, who teamed up with clothes store chain Tati.

Marseille's legions of passionate fans never deserted their team through the bad times: first relegation in 1994-95 as punishment for the Valenciennes bribes disgrace, then the disappointment of finishing as Second Division champions, but being denied promotion when the club went bankrupt.

The fiercely-proud southerners were rescued by a local council loan but condemned to another long slog around outposts of France in front of meagre crowds last season.

They finally secured their return to the top flight in May, thanks largely to the unchallenged hero of the campaign, Republic of Ireland international striker Tony Cascarino, who has enjoyed stunning success in Provence after being branded a flop at Celtic and Chelsea.

Cascarino is the darling of the Velodrome terraces, and his 30 goals made him League top scorer.

Huge orange, white and green tricolour banners were waved in his honour – although his accent owes more to South London than Ireland – and his bludgeoning style confused French defences.

At 33 he feared that he would be on the bench this season, and weighed up a move along the coast to Nice or Cannes, but finally stayed put. The chance to play OM's deadly rivals PSG, champions Auxerre and the likes of Monaco and Nantes in the Velodrome's cauldron of chants, drumbeats, flares and flags proved a powerful incentive.

Coach Gerard Gili knows there is no margin for error when supporters are as vocal and demanding as Marseille's, and has hinted that their expectations may be too high.

He stresses the team is being rebuilt almost from scratch after the shedding of veterans and makeweight youngsters, and dispels dreams of a stroll past the opposition to snatch the title.

Yet even cautious Gili cannot help commenting: "The club is being reborn. We need to reclaim our old place quickly."

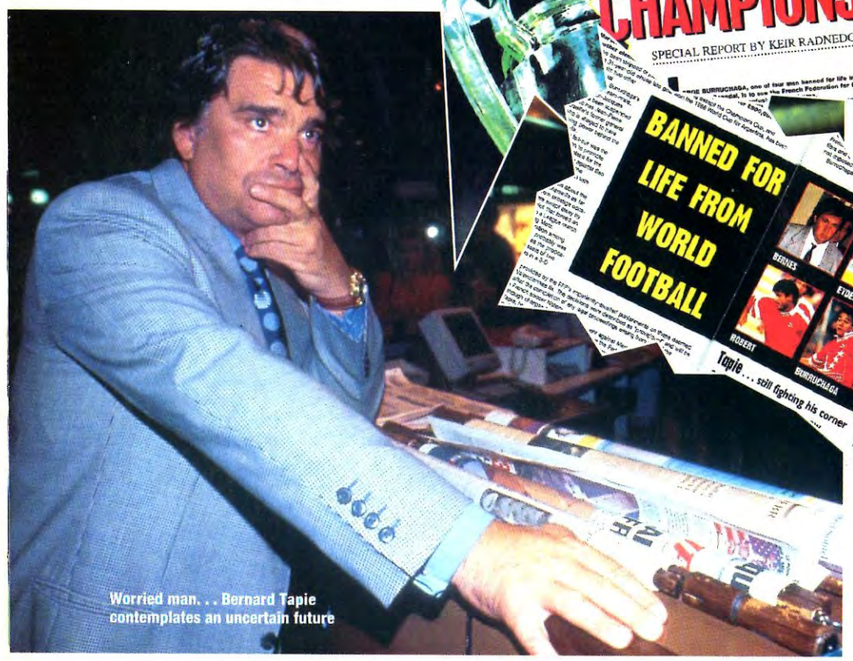
And the pay-per-view TV revolution pioneered this season by satellite station *Canal Plus* means OM will be constantly in the spotlight. Games will be broadcast live each week to those who pay to tune in, as will be every First Division fixture.

Nevertheless, one big shadow remains and threatens to drag up old ghosts: the criminal trial next spring over the £16m black hole in Marseille's accounts during the Tapie era. Some of the money is alleged to have paid referees, funded backhanders or provided leading OM players with tax-free gifts.

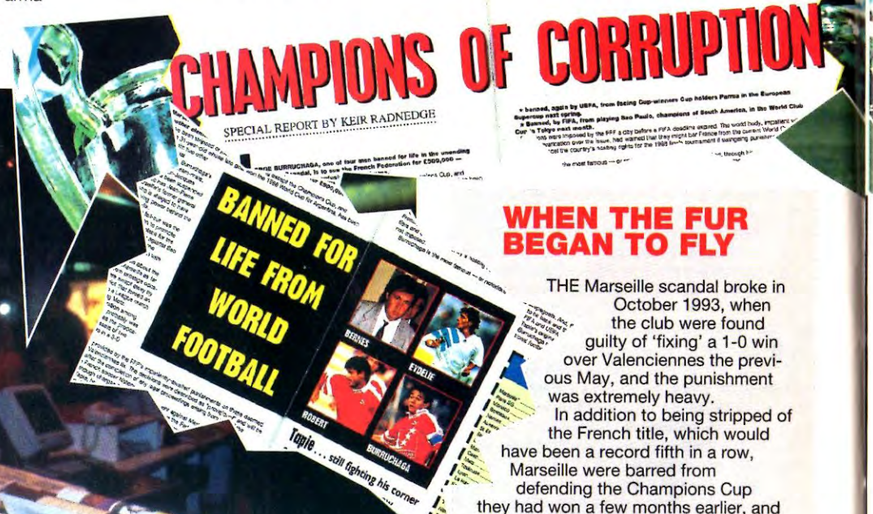
Recent leaks from the police inquiry revealed a mysterious payment to a Belgian intermediary a few days before OM's 1993 Champions Cup semi-final win over Club Brugge. It is the kind of news that chills fans' hearts, throwing into question their team's greatest triumph.

Tapie is afraid, too – of going to prison. But he says: "If it happens, I'll have to do something useful inside. Like giving football lessons."

New arrivals . . . Xavier Gravelaine and (left) Eric Roy



Worried man. . . Bernard Tapie contemplates an uncertain future



CHAMPIONS OF CORRUPTION

SPECIAL REPORT BY KEIR RADNEDGE

BANNED FOR LIFE FROM WORLD FOOTBALL

BERNES

EYDELIE

ROBERT

BURRUCHAGA

Tapie . . . still fighting his corner

WHEN THE FUR BEGAN TO FLY

THE Marseille scandal broke in October 1993, when the club were found guilty of 'fixing' a 1-0 win over Valenciennes the previous May, and the punishment was extremely heavy.

In addition to being stripped of the French title, which would have been a record fifth in a row, Marseille were barred from defending the Champions Cup they had won a few months earlier, and from playing in both the World Club Championship and the European Supercup. Former general manager Jean-Pierre Bernes was banned for life, as were three players – OM's Jean-Jacques Eydelie, who admitted being the go-between, and the Valenciennes pair, Jorge Burruchaga (whose goal had won the 1986 World Cup for Argentina) and Christophe Robert. And the knives were out for club president Tapie.

NEW ARRIVALS FOR 1996-97

Adilson (Bra) (Gremio, Bra)
Xavier Gravelaine (Paris SG)
Yordan Lechkov (Bul) (Hamburg, Ger)
Andreas Kopke (Ger) (Eintracht Frankfurt, Ger)
Chris Makin (Eng) (Oldham, Eng)
Lorenzo Minotti (Ita) (Parma, Ita)
Eric Roy (Lyon)
Reynald Pedros (Nantes)
Ben Slimane (Tun) (Marsa, Tun)

New England coach Glenn Hoddle wants a Frenchman to leave Japan and become the FA's technical director. The man in question, Arsene Wenger, talks exclusively to Gavin Hamilton

THE MAN Glenn Hoddle credits with persuading him to take up coaching could be available to take up a senior position within the Football Association as soon as January.

Speaking from Japan, where he is coach of Nagoya Grampus Eight, Arsene Wenger confirmed that new England coach Hoddle has approached him to be the FA's technical director – and that he is likely to return to Europe when his contract with the J.League club expires in December.

"Here in Japan it's been very interesting," Wenger says. "For two years it's been a great experience. But I need really hard competition again and if I stay here too long, it will be more difficult for me to go back to Europe."

On the approach from Hoddle, Wenger says: "Glenn told me he was interested in me doing the job and asked if I would think about it. I told him I was under contract until December and we could speak about it at a later date.

"I now have to decide whether to stay in Japan for one or two more years. But I now feel that if I stay any longer it will be hard for me to go back to Europe."

Wenger and Hoddle are no strangers, of course. Both joined Monaco in the summer of 1987. Hoddle from Tottenham, for whom he had made his professional debut as a 16-year-old, Wenger from Nancy, where he had been first-team coach. The pair won the French championship in their first season, and Monaco went on to reach the last eight of the Champions Cup the following season.

Hoddle's time at Monaco was curtailed by a serious knee injury, but not before Wenger's influence persuaded him to turn to coaching. The former Swindon and Chelsea manager has credited Wenger with pointing him towards coaching. "Arsene Wenger opened my eyes," he has said.

"When I watched Glenn as a player I always thought he had the qualities needed to be a good coach," Wenger says. "At half-time he could have spoken in my place. He would be telling players what they had to do in the second half.

'I now feel that if I stay any longer in Japan it will be hard for me to go back to Europe'

"I always tried to encourage him. I had the feeling that he had a good understanding of what was going on on the field. He could read the game well and see what the problems of the team were if things weren't working."

Wenger is not surprised that the FA turned to Hoddle as a replacement for Terry Venables. He says: "Glenn is very intelligent – and honest. In this job, it's very important to be intellectually honest. You must be able to reflect, even if you have had a good game, and ask 'what did I do wrong?' That Glenn can do that is one of his greatest qualities."

Comings and goings . . . Wenger is likely to join Hoddle in England, having taken the Tottenham star, and Mark Hateley, to Monaco (above)

Wen
En

Hoddle, the most gifted footballer of his generation, played 53 times for England, but his talent deserved greater recognition. Wenger believes the alienation that Hoddle suffered as a player will motivate him as an international manager. "I spoke to Glenn just after he was appointed," Wenger says. "He was excited because it's a new challenge for him and he loves his country. Although he was a world-class player, maybe sometimes he was a little frustrated in the national team. That will help him to be more determined to do well now."

Hoddle's lack of managerial experience should not prove an obstacle to success, according to Wenger: "It won't be a problem that he is still young. He has played for a long time at the highest level.

"So he is used to the pressure. He has the right balance in his life and he can always maintain the right distance from his job."

Wenger was impressed with England at Euro 96 and believes they can get better under Hoddle. "From what I saw of England during the European Championship they played a good passing game. I know Glenn will want to follow that direction and try to improve it. He has not taken charge of a team that played badly. There is a good basis in the team, and Glenn can move it on."

Hoddle is by no means the only person with reason to thank Wenger for helping him in his career. George Weah, current FIFA Footballer of the Year, said Wenger was the real winner of his FIFA accolade. The Liberian forward called Wenger on to the stage at a gala evening in Milan last January and symbolically presented him with his award, declaring: "Arsene Wenger made me not just the player I am today, but also the man I am."

But Wenger says it was an accident that he was even at the event. "I was so surprised because I should not have even gone to the ceremony. I just happened to be in Milan and said hello to George and he told me: 'I have a ceremony tonight. Please come with me.' It was not planned at all. But George is such a generous man and he showed it again that evening."

Weah first came to Wenger's attention when he was playing for Cameroon's Tonnerre Yaounde. "I had a friend who was working in Cameroon who came to visit me at a training session in Monaco.

"I wanted to ask him if he knew of any strikers who could play behind Mark Hateley. But at the time Hateley was injured, so I asked my friend if he knew of a player who could play in Hateley's place.

"He gave me the name of George Weah. After that I phoned Cameroon every week to check on him. After six months we sent someone over to bring him back to Monaco. So the first time I actually saw George play was in Monaco."

Thanks giving . . . George Weah pays tribute to Wenger (right) as he receives his FIFA Footballer of the Year award

Weah was by no means the finished article when he arrived at Monaco. Far from it, says Wenger. "If you had seen George in his first game with Monaco, you would not believe what he is today. Everybody who saw him in that match would think it unbelievable.

"Of course he has made progress since then, but in his first game he was clumsy, he lost balls, he was slow, he was too fat . . . he was terrible."

'When I watched Glenn as a player I always thought he had the qualities needed to be a good coach'

Wenger took Weah under his wing, even giving him lodgings in his own home, before Weah eventually left for Paris Saint-Germain and Wenger for the J.League.

Wenger, a university graduate in economics, was an amateur player with Mutzig, Mulhouse, Vauban and Strasbourg, before taking charge of the Strasbourg youth section. He moved on to be first-team coach at Cannes and Nancy before joining Monaco. In Japan, 46-year-old Wenger has continued to be a keen student of the international game.

He was disappointed with many aspects of Euro 96, including the newly-introduced 'golden goal' to settle drawn games. "That made things worse," he says. "The players were just looking to avoid making mistakes and were not trying to score. Penalties are not a bad way of deciding things, but the players have to adapt and take more risks.

"There were many good players in Euro 96, but you did not see the super-super-stars like Maradona or Platini. I hope we will see their like again. People need such players and it's important to find them again.

"But I have a feeling that nowadays the star is the team. The players who cannot adapt to that will get left behind."

Nevertheless, Wenger thought Germany were worthy winners. "I'm glad Germany won because at least the team that took some risks took the reward. That was important for football. Too many teams played too defensively."

Changes are needed, says Wenger, if things are to improve. "Reforms are needed in refereeing. The game is too speedy now. The players are too quick, too strong and they try to cheat too often. One referee is not enough. Look at how Romania were punished against Bulgaria in the European Championship [when Dorinel Munteanu's shot clearly crossed the line but was missed by Danish referee Peter Mikelsen].

"The game must sort things out because it's unacceptable for a team to go out of a tournament just because the referee makes a mistake and doesn't see something quickly enough."

Attacking football must also be promoted. "New rules are needed to protect the offensive game," says Wenger. "Now, defenders are punished with red or yellow cards if they foul a forward with a goalscoring opportunity.

"But if the opposing team fouls in midfield and breaks down the attack there, it is just a foul and the whole team has time to get back and defend. We need rules to make fouls which break down attacks in midfield into red card offences."

Grampus Eight, under Wenger, enjoy a reputation as one of the most exciting, attack-oriented teams in the J.League. Wenger, voted J.League manager of the year last year, is keen to point out that the quality of play is improving in Japan.

"The standard is getting better all the time. It's a lot higher than people in Europe think. The Japanese Olympic team took only under-23 players to Atlanta. They beat Brazil and Hungary and would have qualified for the quarter-finals if they had taken three over-age players."

The future for Wenger, though, lies back in Europe. The J.League's loss could be England's gain.

nger for ngland!

ALLSPORT

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FA REFEREES

WE'RE HERE FOR THE GOOD OF THE GAME

Ca$hing in

Newcastle's world-record signing of Alan Shearer could be just the start. The sums of money generated by pay-per-view television are revolutionising football thoughout Europe. Keir Radnedge chronicles the dash for TV cash

EUROPEAN football has a long way to go before it drains television of the oceans of cash still waiting to pour into the accounts of the top clubs and the pockets of their star players.

The TV-financed spending spree on which English and Spanish clubs have embarked this summer is just the start. Newcastle may have paid Blackburn £15million for Alan Shearer, but the fee paid is unlikely to stay a world record for very long.

Pay-per-view is the key to even greater riches and not one European country has yet begun to capitalise on this consumer-driven, tele-viewing phenomenon.

But Italy starts this coming season, France intends to, Spain wants to start next year and so may England. Germany, Holland and even Austria will not be far behind.

The sports-watching public and assorted Members of Parliament will scream in horror at the prospect which is just around the televisual corner. But football's desperation to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible will win the day. Not merely domestic league football but the World Cup itself is now rushing down the pay-per-view path.

By the start of the next millennium, I believe, football will be dictating a twin-track approach to TV coverage: top international and domestic matches will be available live by subscription to cable, satellite or pay-per-view while free coverage will be available in 'mere' late-night highlights programmes via the state broadcasters.

The 1998 World Cup will be the last which European viewers can watch live, 'clear' of some form of encryption.

For so many years the state broadcasters had the market to themselves. They used that monopolistic power to hold down the price of TV soccer. But that's all over now. The specialist sports cable and satellite channels, unrestricted by general audience demands or advertising restrictions, have pushed the price of live soccer far beyond the reach of the old guard.

Media moguls such as Kirch, Murdoch, Berlusconi and Co are smashing through the cosy sports cartel of the EBU – the European Broadcasting Union, which has traditionally cornered European TV rights to big events such as the World Cup and European Championship. The European Court has recently cast doubt on the EBU's role; it was an interim judgment which may prove little more than academic in the circumstances.

Italian channel *Telepiu* has set a model for the shape – and price – of things to come with their proposals for pay-per-view League soccer in Italy this coming season.

The advantage of pay-per-view from the operator's standpoint is control over the signal. Take the example of a Milan fan. The supporter, if he or she lives outside the Milan region, can subscribe to live coverage of all Milan's 34 home and away League games in the 1996-97 season at an overall cost of £215, the equivalent of £6 a match. A fan who lives within the Milan region can subscribe to all the club's 17 away League games at an overall cost of £129 or £3.80 per match.

By the start of the next millennium football have a twin-track approach to TV coverage: international and domestic matches will be available live by cable, satellite or pay per view, while free coverage will be available in 'mere' late-night highlights packages

Newcastle's fifteen million pound man . . . Alan Shearer

Once the system is up and running it is expected that a top match – such as the Milan or Turin derby – would be offered on a one-off basis at £13 to out-of-region fans, while a mid-table match would be offered on a one-off basis at £8.50. Serie B matches will be brought 'on stream' towards the end of this year.

Negotiations are under way to open up the prospect of home matches being available to fans living within a club's region if season ticket sales – either for the season or for a one-off match – have topped, say, 80 per cent.

The price per match is so inviting it is impossible to think that pay-per-view will not be a success. Berlusconi's prediction, that one day stadium entry will be free so as to guarantee a live audience for the benefit of the TV viewer, does not appear either so far-fetched or so far away.

At one stage it had appeared that France would be the first country to embrace pay-per-view. Then the various TV channels began squabbling over which had the rights to what.

It is not merely coincidence that France has become, this summer, one of the greatest exporters of talent. The pay-per-view hold-up has similarly prevented the clubs competing financially to keep their superstars.

Spain's rapidly-expanding television market, with new regional commercial stations using soccer to attack the state system, is enabling the clubs to find their financial feet in a big way. Forget the Premiership, it is Spain's clubs who have been the summer's biggest spenders with a staggering £128million splashed out on new players both from home and abroad.

Antena 3 are paying Real Madrid £9m this year, which the club have chosen to invest in new players rather than in cutting their debts. TV football has even become a more attractive working option for football officials such as for Barcelona's former administrative boss, Anton Parera.

The present Spanish TV deals do not expire until 1998 but the various companies are already buying rights to their place in the queue when bidding begins. One channel has offered to pay off all the debts of the top division Spanish clubs 'merely' to buy the rights for the chance to outbid any rival offers.

The clubs are wasting no time. They are already pressing for the current TV deal, which is due to expire in 1998, to be scrapped one year early. The inference is that they expect the next deal to be so lucrative they would happily pay any penalty clause for quitting the present contract.

It's not just the big clubs who can splash out. Celta Vigo have spent £3m this summer and La Coruna, having splashed out £12m, now field the most expensive team in their modest history.

The pattern is being repeated – or has been inspired – by events at international level. The initial Champions League television and some sponsor contracts come up for renewal next year. No doubt the rates will rise sharply.

UEFA, without even waiting, has already announced an increase in the cash on offer this coming season, while FIFA has sold the rights to the World Cups of 2002 and 2006 to a joint consortium made up of the German media magnate Kirch and FIFA's long-time commercial agents, ISL Marketing of Lucerne.

Manchester United, for example, will earn more than £11m if they win all their group matches and then go on to win the Final. The 16 group participants will each receive £1m, the same amount as last year, simply by having qualified for the first phase. But there are 10 per cent better bonuses of £265,000 for a draw and £530,000 for each win in the group matches.

A quarter-final place would yield about £1.5m, with more than £1.6m on offer if they reach the semi-finals. The incentive of reaching the final is a further £2.12m.

Out of the income generated from the Champions League, each of UEFA's 50 member associations, as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina, will be paid around £100,000.

The same principles have governed FIFA's award of the World Cup television rights for 2002 and 2006. Indeed, it was UEFA which forced FIFA to open up the bidding process for World Cup TV rights.

Seven international companies bid for the rights, including Mark McCormack's IMG and T.E.A.M. Marketing, which is UEFA's marketing arm for the Champions League. In the end FIFA agreed terms with the ISL-Kirsch alliance.

Their bid was worth £1.45billion, made up of £650m for the 2002 finals and £800m for 2006.

These sums, which do not include TV rights for North America, dwarf the £120m global deal concluded for the 1998 World Cup, in France.

Kirch-ISL is empowered to sell on World Cup TV coverage to the highest bidders. But Sky, for example, would be barred from signing an exclusive deal for the UK to shut out BBC and ITV altogether. FIFA retains the power to vet each deal and general secretary Sepp Blatter insists that the World Cup should "remain accessible to viewers who do not possess expensive satellite or cable systems".

The EBU, which offered just over £1billion for the two tournaments, has complained bitterly at the prospective indignity of having to go cap in hand to Kirch, which has interests in both BSkyB (parent company of Sky) and Berlusconi's commercial TV operation in Italy.

The most likely outcome is that specific World Cup ties will go subscription or pay-per-view and the rest will be available to terrestrial channels in highlights packages.

Football's brave new world, indeed.

TRANSFER TOTALS Summer 1996

Spain	£128million
Italy	£85million
England	£75million

Top ten fees this summer in each country

SPAIN		
Ronaldo	Barcelona	£12.8m
Mijatovic	Real Madrid	£6.4m
Rivaldo	La Coruna	£5.4m
Karpin	Valencia	£5.3m
Suker	Real Madrid	£5.1m
F George	Betis	£5m
Giovanni	Barcelona	£5m
Romario	Valencia	£4.8m
Vitor Baia	Barcelona	£4m
Seedorf	Real Madrid	£3.2m
ITALY		
Chiesa	Parma	£10m
Boksic	Juventus	£6m
Oliveira	Fiorentina	£5.3m
Thuram	Parma	£4.5m
Valencia	Reggiana	£4.2m
Toldo	Fiorentina	£4m
Amoroso	Udinese	£4m
Protti	Lazio	£3.7m
Djorkaeff	Inter	£3.6m
Zidane	Juventus	£3.2m
ENGLAND		
Shearer	Newcastle	£15m
Ravanelli	Middlesbrough	£7m
Di Matteo	Chelsea	£4.5m
Poborsky	Man Utd	£3.6m
Emerson	Middlesbrough	£3.5m
Speed	Everton	£3.4m
Bowyer	Leeds	£3m
McAllister	Coventry	£3m
Booth	Sheffield Wed	£2.7m
Leboeuf	Chelsea	£2.5m

ITALY

The new season in Europe

Movers and shakers

It's been another busy summer. Paddy Agnew rounds up the transfer market action

ATALANTA

As ever, the club from the 'bricklayers' town of Bergamo will have first division survival as their seasonal objective.

With experienced coach Emilio Mondonico at the helm, that seems feasible, even if it is difficult to evaluate their three new foreign signings – Serb defender Zoran Mirkovic, Swedish midfielder Joakim Persson and Uruguayan striker Frederico Magallanes.

In: Mirkovic (Yug) (Partizan Belgrade, Yug), Persson (Swe) (Malmo, Swe), Magallanes (Uru) (Penarol, Uru), Micillo (Cesena), Carrera (Juventus), Inzaghi (Parma), Rossini (Piacenza), Sottil (Fiorentina).

Out: Vieri (Juventus), Ferron (Sampdoria), Montero (Juventus), Pavone (Bologna), A Paganin (Verona), Tovalieri (Reggiana).

BOLOGNA

A welcome return to Serie A for one of the historic 'greats' of Italian soccer, who won the last of their seven titles back in 1964.

No one expects the newly-promoted side to repeat those feats, yet the £5.2m splashed out on a foreign strike force of Andersson and Kolivanov suggests Bologna mean business.

Coach Renzo Ulivieri remains in his post and has picked up three free-transfer bargains in defender Giancarlo Marocchi, utility player Davide Fontolan and striker Pierpaolo Bresciani.

In: Andersson (Swe) (Bari), Cardone (Milan, loan), Marocchi (Juventus), Fontolan (Inter), Bresciani, Kolivanov (Foggia), Pavone (Atalanta).

Out: Pergolizzi (Brescia), Valtolina (Piacenza).

CAGLIARI

Two years ago, Cagliari president Massimo Cellino surprisingly sacked coach Bruno Giorgi and replaced him with a relatively unknown Uruguayan called Oscar Washington Tabarez (now coach to Milan).

History repeated itself this summer as Giorgi was removed to make way for Gregorio Perez of Penarol, despite Giorgi having saved the club from relegation after taking over from Giovanni Trapattoni last February.

Perez will do well to repeat Tabarez's success, given the seemingly modest quality of the four new foreign signings.

In: Lonstrup (Den) (FC Copenhagen, Den), Tinkler (SA) (Vitoria Setubal, Por), Vega (Swi) (Grasshopper, Swi), Pascolo (Swi) (Servette, Swi), Bettarini (Lucchese), Banchelli (Fiorentina), Grassadonia (Salernitana).

Out: Oliveira (Fiorentina), Benassi (Salernitana), Firicano (Fiorentina), Venturin (Lazio), Bonomi (Cesena), Lantignotti (Padova), Pusceddu (Fiorentina).

FIORENTINA

Can Fiorentina continue where they left off last season? Season-ticket sales are booming, the fans expect great things and the club has responded by signing Brazilian-born, naturalised Belgian Luis Oliveira for £5.3m.

Is it enough? The new man will play alongside Florentine idol and club captain, Argentine Gabriel Batistuta, and may be the only significant change with players such as Portuguese midfielder Rui Costa and Swedish midfielder Stefan Schwarz still crucial to Fiorentina plans.

One obvious reservation about Fiorentina concerns an understandable temptation for them to concentrate on the Cup-winners Cup campaign. All in all, they have to start in the ranks of second favourites, despite last season's heroics.

In: Oliveira (Bel), Pusceddu (Calgiari), Falcone (Torino), Stefani (Maceratese), Firicano (Calgiari).

Out: Sottil (Atalanta), Flachi (Bari), A Orlando (Udinese), Banchelli (Cagliari).

INTERNAZIONALE

It's now or never. Even though Inter's affable English coach Roy Hodgson keeps playing down his side's prospects, he knows that club owner, petrol millionaire Massimo Moratti, expects success this season.

Moratti took the post-Bosman era seriously, engaging no less than five talented foreigners – Frenchmen Youri Djorkaeff (£3.2m) and Jocelyn Angloma (£500,000), Chilean Ivan Zamorano (£1.7m), Dutchman Aron Winter (free) and Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu (£1.3m).

Hodgson will have to blend their undoubted talent with existing players such as Nicola Berti, Javier Zanetti and Paul Ince.

'Mister' Hodgson faces a tall order putting manners and order on a side which may well start the season with as many as six foreigners in the side. Watch out for fireworks, and not always on the pitch.

In: Djorkaeff (Fra) (Paris St. Germain, Fra), Zamorano (Chi) (Real Madrid, Spa), Winter (Hol) (Lazio), Kanu (Nig) (Ajax Amsterdam, Hol), Angloma (Fra) (Torino), Tarantino (Napoli), Mazzantini (Venezia), Galante (Genoa), Pantanelli (Reggiana).

Out: Roberto Carlos (Bra) (Real Madrid, Spa), A Bianchi (Cesena), Fontolan (Bologna), Orlandini (Verona), Caio (Bra) (Napoli), Landucci (Venezia), Kallon (Lecce), Pedroni (Torino), Maricone (Perugia).

JUVENTUS

The 'old lady' and reigning European champions provided the greatest shock of the Italian summer when selling not only the ageing Gianluca Vialli but also his attacking partner Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Italian 'amour propre' suffered at the thought that English soccer can now buy out the cream of Italian native talent. Juventus have replaced Ravanelli and Vialli with Croat Alen Boksic (£6m) and Atalanta striker Christian Vieri (£3m), while further reinforcements have arrived in the shape of Frenchman Zinedine Zidane (£3.2m) and Uruguayan defender Paolo Montero (free).

Two questions remain. Will such as Alessandro Del Piero, Michele Padovano, Boksic et al manage to adequately replace Vialli and Ravanelli, two key figures in the last two successful Juventus seasons?

Will Juventus repeat last season when they opted to concentrate on the Champions Cup rather than the league?

In: Boksic (Cro) (Lazio), Zidane (Fra) (Bordeaux, Fra), Amoruso (Padova), Vieri (Atalanta), Montero (Uru) (Atalanta), Juliano (Salernitana), Falcioni (Olbia), Grabbi (Chievo), Ametrano (Udinese).

Out: Ravanelli (Middlesbrough, Eng), Vialli (Chelsea, Eng), Carrera (Atalanta), Marocchi (Bologna), Vierchowod (Perugia), Paulo Sousa (Por) (Borussia Dortmund, Ger), Baccin (Cesena), Binotto (Verona).

LAZIO

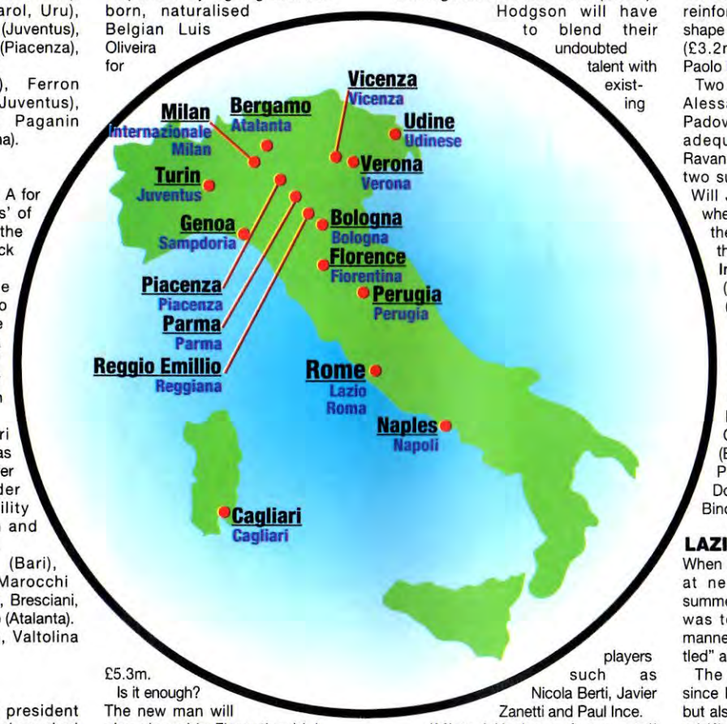
When Dutchman Aron Winter arrived at new club Internazionale this summer, one of his first observations was to express incredulity at the manner in which Lazio had "dismantled" a fine team.

The observation is a timely one since Lazio unloaded not only Winter but also Croat striker Alen Boksic and midfielder Roberto Di Matteo. Replacements in the shape of Czech Pavel Nedved, South African Mark Fish (£1.1m), Australian Paul Okon (free) and last season's joint leading goalscorer Igor Protti (£3m) hardly convince.

Lazio start very much on the second row of the grid.

In: Protti (Bari), Baronio (Brescia), Nedved (Cze) (Sparta Prague, Cze), Buso (Napoli), Fish (SA) (Orlando Pirates, SA), Okon (Bel) (Club Brugge, Bel), Venturin (Cagliari), Cudicini (Prato).

Out: Boksic (Juventus), Di Matteo (Chelsea, Eng), Winter (Inter), Esposito (Napoli), Mancini (Foggia), Romano (Brescia), Iannuzzi (Vicenza), Piccioni (Ascoli).



MILAN

To state the obvious – Milan are the side to beat. The reigning champions look stronger than ever thanks to the signings of Dutchmen Edgar Davids and Michael Reiziger (both free) and Frenchman Christophe Dugarry (£2.6m).

What is more, in a squad already rich in household names such as Baresi, Maldini, Costacurta, Desailly, Albertini, Boban, Savicevic, Weah and Baggio, none of the new boys can be sure of commanding a regular place.

There are only two reservations. Firstly, how will new coach, Uruguayan Oscar Washington Tabarez, make out in the hot seat and, secondly, will Milan be tempted to concentrate on the Champions Cup at the expense of the league?

In: Davids, Reiziger (Hol) (Ajax, Hol), Dugarry (Fra) (Bordeaux, Fra), Pagotto (Sampdoria).

Out: Futre (Por) (West Ham, Eng), Di Canio (Celtic, Sco), Donadoni (NY/NJ MetroStars, US), Sordo (Reggiana), Colombo (Fiorenzuola), Casonato (Ancona).

NAPOLI

Honest work with limited resources at Cremonese has earned coach Gigi Simoni a crack at the (relatively) big time of Napoli. Whereas in the Maradona halcyon days, Simoni would be preparing a side to challenge for the title, now he will just hope to ensure first division survival.

Belgian defender Bertrand Crasson (free), Brazilian midfielder Beto (£2.2m) and striker Nicola Caccia (£1.5m) strengthen a squad which still features Brazilian Andre Cruz, Frenchman Alain Boghossian and Argentine Roberto Ayala.

In: Crasson (Bel) (Anderlecht, Bel), Turrini (Piacenza), Panarelli (Taranto), Caio (Bra) (Inter), Esposito (Lazio), Sardone (Altamura), Caccia (Piacenza), Aglietti (Reggina), Beto (Bra) (Botofago, Bra), Pietropaolo (Puteolano), Milanese (Torino), Baldini (Lucchese).

Out: Pari (Piacenza), Agostini (Cesena), Buso (Lazio), Pizzi (Parma), Tarantino (Inter), Sbrizzo (Reggina), Corini (Verona).

PARMA

Parma were the biggest spenders of the summer when splashing out £10m for Sampdoria wonder boy Enrico Chiesa, while they also bought four foreigners – Frenchman Daniel Bravo (free), Argentine Herman Crespo (£2.6m), Frenchman Lilian Thuram (£4.5m) and Brazilian Amaral (£2.6m).

Along with new coach Carlo Ancelotti (the ex-Roma and ex-Milan player who coached Reggiana back into Serie A last season), these players face a difficult task in refloating Parma fortunes after a disappointing season.

Despite confident noises from the Parma camp, they start well behind Milan. Final thought – why did Fabio Capello turn down the coach's job at Parma?

In: Chiesa (Sampdoria), Thuram (Fra) (Monaco, Fra), Crespo (Arg) (River Plate, Arg), Amaral (Bra) (Palmeiras, Bra), Bravo (Fra) (Paris St Germain, Fra), Pizzi (Napoli), Strada (Reggiana).

Out: Stoichkov (Bul) (Barcelona, Spa), Fernando Couto (Por), Di Chiara (Perugia), Inzaghi (Atalanta), Pin (Piacenza), Castellini (Perugia), Susic (Cremonese), Arioli (Carpi).

PERUGIA

Perugia owner Luciano Gaucci, a man who once won the Arc de Triomphe horse race (Tony Bin, 1988), believes his club can finish in the top eight.

Given coach Giovanni Galeone's well established enthusiasm for open attacking football, we suggest newly promoted Perugia will finish much further down the field.

Galeone has however added experience to his defence with the signings of 37-year-old Pietro Vierchowod (free) and Yugoslav international goalkeeper Aleksandr Kocic (£600,000), while Dutchman Michel Kreek (free) and Croat Milan Rapaic (£600,000) may add attacking bite.

In: Kocic (Yug) (Vojvodina, Yug), Rapaic (Cro) (Hajduk Split, Cro), Matrecano (Parma), Di Chiara (Parma), Vierchowod (Juventus), Kreek (Hol) (Padova), Artistico (Ancona), Gautieri (Bari), Traversa (Pescara), Castellini (Parma), Manicone (Inter).

Out: M Beghetto (Vicenza), Pierotti (Cosenza), Suppa (Lucchese), Lombardo (Lucchese), Braglia (Lucchese), Vitali (Casarano).

PIACENZA

Habitual Serie A relegation battlers, Piacenza are not pro-Bosman – they have no foreigners on the books.

With a new coach in Bortolo Mutti (his first season in Serie A) and with new signings in the shape of the experienced Davide Tentoni (£750,000) and Pasquale Luiso (£1m), Piacenza look set to struggle.

In: Tentoni (Cremonese), Pari (Napoli), Tramezzani (Cesena), Marcon (Andria), Pin (Parma), Valoti (Verona), Valtolina (Bologna), Luiso (Avellino), Scienza (Venezia).

Out: Turrini (Napoli), A Carbone (Reggiana), Caccia (Napoli).

REGGIANA

Newly-promoted Reggiana look very cosmopolitan. Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu (ex-Brescia) can call on six foreigners – Austrian defender Michael Hatz (free), Belgian defender Georges Grun (free), German defender Dietmar Beiersdorfer (£160,000), Romanian midfielder Ioan Sabau (£130,000) and Colombian striker Adolfo Valencia (£4.2m) as well as Russian Igor Simutenkov.

The fact that Reggiana bought three foreign defenders says much about their intentions and aspirations.

In: Hatz (Aut) (Rapid Vienna, Aut), Grun (Bel) (Anderlecht, Bel), Beiersdorfer (Ger) (Koln, Ger), Sabau (Rom) (Brescia), Valencia (Col) (Independiente, Col), Sciacca (Foggia), Pedone (Bari), Sordo (Milan), Cherubini (Roma), A Carbone (Piacenza), Tovalieri (Atalanta).

Out: Cevoli (Torino), Pietranera (Cosenza), Strada (Parma), Ziliani (Cosenza), Taribello (Triestina).

ROMA

Difficult to make a case for a Roma side whose two new foreigners – Swedish striker Martin Dahlin (£2.2m) and Argentine defender Roberto Trotta (£2.1m) – hardly look good enough to help the side make the quantum leap from UEFA qualifier to title-winner.

Perhaps the new coach, Argentinian Carlos Bianchi, can work the miracle, aided by fellow countryman Abel Balbo, Brazilian Aldair and Uruguayan Daniel Fonseca. Perhaps.

In: Dahlin (Swe) (Borussia Monchengladbach, Ger), Trotta (Arg) (Velez Sarsfield, Arg), Tommasi (Verona), Grossi (Vicenza), Bernardini (Torino).

Out: Giannini (Sturm Graz, Aut), Cherubini (Reggiana), Florio (Cosenza), Scarchilli (Torino).

SAMPDORIA

The fact that Sampdoria offloaded Enrico Chiesa and Dutchman Clarence Seedorf for a combined £14m and then went on to try hard to sell Frenchman Christian Karembeu suggests that the club was, as ever, more concerned with balancing the books than winning the title.

Replacements in Argentine striker Juan Sebastian Veron (£2.6m) and French midfielder Pierre Laigle (£1.5m) are unlikely to guarantee Sampdoria anything better than a mid-table finish. Positive note is that Swede Sven Goran Eriksson remains team coach.

In: Veron (Arg) (Boca Juniors, Arg), Laigle (Fra) (Lens, Fra), Montella (Genoa), Ferron (Atalanta), Zanini (Verona), Vergassola (Carrarese).

Out: Chiesa (Parma), Seedorf (Hol) (Real Madrid, Spa), Zenga (Padova), Zito (Carrarese), Belluci (Venezia), Pagotto (Milan).

Milanese man . . . new Inter signing Youri Djorkaeff

UDINESE

Coach Alberto Zaccheroni can again call on nearly all the key elements of the side which surprised many last season with a mid-table finish.

German Euro 96 star Oliver Bierhoff looked set for a move but has remained and will be joined by one interesting new foreigner in Brazilian striker Amoroso (£350,000).

First division survival remains the primary objective.

In: Amoroso (Bra) (Guarani, Bra), Eman (Zamalek, Egy), Gargo (Torino), Turci (Cremonese), Tentoni (Cremonese), A Orlando (Fiorentina).

Out: Stefani (Cremonese), Gregori (Verona), Montalbano, Mauro (both Reggina), Ametrano (Juventus).

VERONA

Back in Serie A after a four-year absence, Verona look to ex-Piacenza coach Luigi Cagni for Serie A survival.

Orlandini (free), Corini (£650,000) and Brazilian striker Reinaldo (£160,000) are the major signings in a side that may well struggle.

In: Italiano (Trapani), Bacci (Torino), Binotto (Juventus), A Paganin (Atalanta), Corini (Napoli), Reinaldo (Palmeiras).

Out: Tommasi (Roma), Valoti (Piacenza), Marangon (Venezia), Lamacchi (Pescara).

VICENZA

The 'revelation' side of last season looks practically unchanged with Uruguyan striker Ortero and midfielder Di Carlo still crucial.

New signing, Cameroon midfielder Pier Wome (£420,000), may spend much of the season on the bench.

Vicenza will do well to repeat last year's good run.

In: Wome (Cam) (Canon Yaounde, Cam), M Beghetto (Perugia), Coppola (Nola), Iannuzzi (Lazio), Sotgia (Cosenza).

Out: Bjorklund (Swe) (Rangers, Sco), Grossi (Roma).

SPAIN

The new season in Europe

Spot the Spaniard!

Domestic players are fighting for recognition amid a flood of foreign imports. Graham Turner reports

NOBODY is quite sure where the financial manna has suddenly fallen from, but Spanish clubs have been spending it as if to the manna born.

In two months they lashed out £128m, refuted notions that England's Premier League is where the big money lives and now claim that the 1996-97 *liga* will outshine the star-studded Serie A.

The winds of change have blown so fiercely through Spanish football that, although the fans are guaranteed a soccer spectacle, most teams open the new campaign as unknown quantities.

All, however, is not sweetness, light and lorryloads of pesetas. In the wake of the Bosman ruling, foreign signings are up 65 per cent on last year. Yet 72 per cent of transfer fees have been related to non-EU signings and the lifting of restrictions on foreign imports has created a severe drop in the places of work open to Spanish players, despite the Federation's decision to allow clubs to register 25 professionals, three more than last season.

Under severe pressure from the clubs, the Federation, having initially proposed a limit of three, agreed to a maximum of six non-EU players per club. Watching the procession over the Pyrenees, even Athletic Bilbao have been moved to bend their hitherto rigid rules, signing Frenchmen Bixente Lizarazu and arguing that he is, indeed, Basque.

The worst news, nevertheless, has been whispered into Javier Clemente's shell-like ear. Other national team managers might shrug their shoulders and argue that imports and exports even themselves out. Clemente has no such consolation. Spain remains a major importer and a very minor exporter.

The result is that Real Madrid and Barcelona could – if Clemente is lucky – field as many as four Spanish players this season and all of those are likely to be defenders or anchor-role midfielders.

At club level, the summer spending spree seems sure to consolidate Spain among Europe's elite. One wonders, however, about the medium-term effects on Spain as a national team.

The clubs, it seems, couldn't care less. The peseta cashcade has left the Spanish public open-mouthed. A few months ago Real Madrid were gloomily admitting debts totalling £70m, and here they are waving cheques totalling £19.4m for new signings. A few months ago, Barcelona were groaning under the weight of a (hotly contested) £23.5m tax demand, and now open September by stepping into court and trying to fend off a multi-million claim from a certain Johan Cruyff, who alleges that his abrupt mid-May dismissal was palpably wrongful. That has not stopped the club from spending £24.9m.

The investments have enabled the Big Two to strengthen their status as perennial favourites to such an extent that one also wonders how the rest of the division is going to live with them. The rich have got a damned sight richer and the poor seem condemned to a struggle for survival, scraping for crumbs in the bottom half of a classist championship.

The most glaring antidote to the sort of figures mentioned above is Extremadura. Remember how Albacete were thumped 5-0 at home by Salamanca in last year's play-offs yet were bureaucratically reinstated in the First Division? Albacete finally got their come-downance in this season's play-off, when Extremadura beat them 1-0 at home and away to secure the first-ever First Division appearance for the club from the Extremadura region's sixth-largest town – Almendralejo (pop. 24,966).

Capacity at Extremadura's Francisco De La Hera stadium is 6,000. The club president, Pedro Nieto, is a wine merchant who thought he had made history by taking the club into the Second Division in 1994, after 30 years on football's equivalent of the lower slopes. They finished fifth last season and made the play-offs only because Real Madrid's reserves could not be promoted.

The immediate sequel to Extremadura's shock promotion was the loss of ace scorer Manuel, to Compostela. At the time of writing their close-season signings had cost the princely sum of £102,564. What odds on their beating Barcelona or Real Madrid?

The normally-canny Catalans reluctantly claimed a then world record for their signing of Ronaldo from PSV. Whether the $20m fee beat the £13m Milan paid for Gianluigi Lentini in 1992 became academic when Newcastle paid £15m for Alan Shearer.

The £5.13m paid to Santos for midfielder Giovanni Silva, the £4.87m paid to FC Porto for Vitor Baia and the £2.05m paid to Parma for the repatriation of Hristo Stoichkov may pale in comparison, but Clemente is even paler at the prospect of his ex-mentor Bobby Robson selecting a Barça line-up which could be something like Vitor Baia; Ferrer, Blanc, Nadal, Sergi; Guardiola, Figo, Popescu, Giovanni; Ronaldo, Stoichkov.

He can't expect Fabio Capello to do him many favours at Real Madrid, either. He will pick up a very basic £1.5m per season and he could field Canizares; Carlos Secretario (£1.35m from Porto), Hierro, Alkorta, Roberto Carlos (£3m from Inter Milan); Clarence Seedorf (Sampdoria for £3.35m plus the proceeds from two friendlies), Redondo, Raul, Amavisca, Predrag Mijatovic (£6.4m plus VAT from Valencia) and Davor Suker (£5.13m from Sevilla).

They won't be running Spot the Ball competitions in Spain this season: it'll be Spot the Spaniard instead.

Clemente's nightmares don't stop at the Big Two. John Toshack faces a stern test in his second season at Deportivo and his close-season shopping has included Rivaldo (Palmeiras £5.4m), Nourredine Naybet (Sporting Lisbon £1.3m), Corentin Martins (Auxerre £1.92m), Petr Kouba (Sparta Prague £1m) and French Under-21 striker Sylvain Wiltord (Rennes £3.3m), plus Jacques Songo'o (Metz) and Michael Madar (Monaco), who were both end-of-contract players. With Djukic, Mauro Silva and Radchenko already on the books, Tosh could put out a team containing only two Spaniards.

In the meantime, Valencia were trying to seduce Romario. That involved paying £2.25m to Barcelona; £650,000 to Flamengo; and, for two seasons' work, £2.5m to Romario, plus a luxury beachside villa and two cars – having also signed Valeri Karpin, £5.3m from Real Sociedad and, for £2.6m apiece, Goran Vlaovic (Padova) and 'Piojo' Lopez (Racing Avellaneda). Spanish presence in Luis Aragones's workforce will be restricted to the engine-room.

Even Betis have invested over £15m during the summer – including a £5m deal with Ajax which kept Finidi George away from Real Madrid.

Yet nobody seems willing to stand up and say where the cash has come from. Gomez Pintado, a former presidential candidate at Real Madrid, challenged president Lorenzo Sanz to reveal his sources, suspecting that a group of impresarios were making a financial putsch for control of the club.

Sanz deepened the mystery by clamping his top hat to the table and darkly declaring that only the socios would be told how he had pulled so many rabbits out of it.

Television, of course, has much – but by no means all – to do with it and the Football League AGM has given the green light for experiments with the pay-per-view formula to be implanted in France. As regular readers will know, *antena 3* and *Canal+* have invested some £120m in new contracts with First Division clubs who are now pressing for the regional TV networks to relinquish the two seasons still to run on their existing contracts.

The cash injection undoubtedly has pumped enthusiasm into the veins of the public but at the same time has made predictions for the 1996-96 The pack has been so extensively shuffled that it is hard to say who will come up with a winning hand. On paper, Real and Barcelona look formidable, but both Capello and Robson will be under enormous pressure to produce results compatible with the massive investments.

Capello has the advantage of taking over a ship which was listing so badly that any semblance of an even keel will be instantly recognisable by fans at Bernabeu as a major improvement.

Robson faces the more daunting task of making the Catalans forget the Cruyff era and, unfortunately for him, the aborted signings of Andy Kopke and Emmanuel Amunike gave Cruyff's entourage an immediate chance to say the club had lost their way.

The Battle of Amunike's Knee looks like finding its way into the annals of FIFA. Barcelona's medical staff decided the joint looked dodgy and sent him back to Lisbon. Sporting got their Amunikes in a big twist and claimed the Nigerian winger was AOK. Barcelona responded by offering, charitably, to take Amunike free of charge for six months and send him back if anything went wrong with the knee. Sporting insisted that the player had a leg to stand on whereas Barcelona didn't. Enter FIFA'S Legal committee . . . and the left-footer Robson was so keen to sign, Hristo Stoichkov.

He made a mess of his two-year contract by crying all over it. The tears were souvenirs of the good times – and 108 goals – he had enjoyed in the Catalan capital, and one season in Parma was enough to provoke an acute case of homesickness. He rejected a £6m offer from Turkey and accepted a cut in wages to return. His attacking partnership with Ronaldo should make the sparks fly.

Talking about returns of prodigals, few could have been curiouser than Alfonso's return to Madrid. He was sold to Betis for £3.6m last year with a buy-back clause and, although Real duly put up the money, Betis claimed they had done so after the legal deadline.

With the Football League wobbling towards the Betis side of the fence, Real agreed to pay £1.8m to take Alfonso back on loan for two years.

You might be wondering if, when and how the defending champions, Atletico Madrid, will get a look in. That looks like being one of the major question marks over the new season.

Coach Raddy Antic has refused to be caught up in the panic buying, insisting "change for change's sake doesn't get you any further forward". His only notable signings have been striker Juan Esnaider (£2.3m) and Radek Bejbl (£3m).

Club president Jesus Gil claims his best summer signing is Jose Luis Caminero who, on the plane towards the Euro 96 finals, had vowed never to play for Atletico again.

● SPANISH referees are whistling up support for a bid to overturn the decision to designate match officials by computer instead of the pencil and paper of referees' association president Victoriano Sanchez Arminio.

"I am convinced that the system will not even last one season," he says. "At least the clubs can now blame the computer if they don't like the refereeing."

Back at Barça . . . Stoichkov resigns for Barcelona

TEAM BY TEAM

ATHLETIC BILBAO
In: Luis Fernandez (Fra) (coach), Corino (Merida), Lizarazu (Fra) (Bordeaux, Fra). **Out:** Galdames (Compostela), Valverde (Mallorca).

ATLETICO MADRID
In: Bejbl (Cze) (Slavia Prague, Cze), Esnaider (Arg) (Real Madrid), Ivan Rocha (Valladolid), Aguilera (Tenerife), Pablo (Racing), Ezquerro (Osasuna). **Out:** Tomas.

BARCELONA
In: B Robson (Eng) (coach), Ronaldo (Bra) (PSV, Hol), Blanc (Fra) (Auxerre, Fra), Luis Enrique (Real Madrid), Pizzi (Tenerife), Giovanni (Bra) (Santos, Bra), Vitor Baia (Por) (FC Porto, Por). **Out:** Angoy (Cordoba), Toni Velamazan (Oviedo), Hagi.

BETIS
In: Finidi George (Nig) (Ajax, Hol), Nadj (Yug) (Par. Belgrade, Yug), Virgilio Ferreira (Cerro Porteno, Par), Prats (Celta), Luis Fernandez (Racing), Bjelica (Cro) (Albacete). **Out:** Diezma (Celta), Arpon, Sanchez Jara (Racing), Menendez (Albacete), Alfonso (Real Madrid).

CELTA
In: Del Solar (Per), Josema (both Salamanca), Prieto (Merida), Belenguer (Leganes), Javi Gonzalez (Sestao), Diezma (Real Betis), Mazinho (Bra) (Valencia), Dutuel (Fra) (Bordeaux, Fra), Mostovoi (Rus) (Strasbourg, Fra). **Out:** Prats (Betis), Milojevic, Mariano (Merida), Michel (Salamanca).

COMPOSTELA
In: Schenkhuizen (Hol) (NEC, Hol), Popov (Rus) (Racing), Saula (Yug) (Vojvodina, Yug), Sastre, Manuel (Extremadura), Galdames (Bilbao). **Out:** Tocornal (Badajoz), Virgilio (Merida), Abadia, Dulce (Logrones).

DEPORTIVO
In: Rivaldo (Bra) (Palmeiras, Bra), Wiltord (Fra) (Rennes, Fra), Martins (Fra) (Auxerre, Fra), Armando (Oviedo), Naybet (Mor) (Sporting, Por), Songo'o (Cam) (Metz, Fra), Madar (Fra) (Monaco, Fra), Kouba (Cze) (Sparta Prague, Cze). **Out:** Bebeto (Bra) (Flamengo, Bra), Aldana (Espanyol), Lopez Rekarte (Mallorca), Villarroya (Sporting).

ESPANYOL
In: Jose Carcelen (coach), Pralija (Cro) (Hajduk Split, Cro), Aldana (Deportivo), Oudec (Fra) (Nantes, Fra). **Out:** Raducioiu (Rom) (West Ham, Eng).

EXTREMADURA
In: Torres (Badajoz), Soler (Marbella). **Out:** Manuel, Sastre (Compostela).

HERCULES
In: Ivan Brzic (coach), Paqui (Zaragoza), Maestri (Per) (Spor. Cristal, Per), Moj (Toledo), Huard (Fra) (Bordeaux, Fra), Artner (Aut) (Cas. Salzburg, Aut), Ferreras (Sevilla). **Out:** Gonzalo, Garzon, David (Albacete), Valerio (Real Madrid).

LOGRONES
In: Miguel Angel Lotina (coach), Adzic (Yug) (Red Star Belgrade, Yug), Kientz (Mallorca), Canals (Arg) (Huracan, Arg), Morales (Mallorca). **Out:** Pinillos (Racing), Oscar, Matute (Chaves), Herrero (Toledo).

OVIEDO
In: Juan Manuel Lillo (coach), Toni Velamazan (Barça), Gay (Zaragoza), Ivan Iglesias (Sporting). **Out:** Jerkan (Nott. Forest, Eng), Armando (Deportivo).

RACING SANTANDER
In: Marcos Alonso (coach), Pinillos (Logrones), Arpon, Sanchez Jara (Betis), Shustikov (Rus) (Tor. Moscow, Rus), Zalazar (Albacete). **Out:** Luis Fernandez (Betis), Popov (Compostela), Pablo (At. Madrid).

RAYO VALLECANO
In: Francisco Garcia 'Paquito' (coach), Contreras (Real Madrid), Jose Maria (Merida), Muniz (Sporting). **Out:** Onesimo (Sevilla), Calderon (Lleida), Wilfred (Ecija).

REAL MADRID
In: Capello (Ita) (coach), Secretario (FC Porto, Por), Mijatovic (Valencia), Seedorf (Sampdoria, Ita), Suker (Cro) (Sevilla), R. Carlos (Inter, Ita), Valerio (Hercules), Alfonso (Betis), Petkovic (Sevilla). **Out:** M Laudrup (Vissel Kobe, Jap), Esnaider (At. Madrid), Luis Enrique (Barcelona), Zamorano (Inter, Ita), Michel (Atl. Celaya, Mex), Contreras (Rayo Vallecano), Gomez (Sevilla).

REAL SOCIEDAD
In: Kovacevic (Shef. Wed, Eng), Mild (Swe) (IFK, Swe), Gomez (Riv. Plate, Arg). **Out:** Ramirez (Colo Colo, Chi), Karpin (Rus) (Valencia).

SEVILLA
In: Jose Antonio Camacho (coach), Tsartes (AEK Athens, Gre), Aranalde (Marbella), Salva (Ecija), Onesimo (Vallecano), Mornar, Hibic (Hajduk Split, Cro), Ramis (Tenerife), Gomez (Real Madrid), Marinakis (Olympiakos, Gre). **Out:** Suker (Real Madrid), Maya (Valencia), Diego (Albacete), Monchu (Mallorca), Ferreras (Hercules), Agosthino (Salamanca).

SPORTING GIJON
In: Benito Floro (coach), Fredi (Lleida), Kaiku (Orense), Nikiforov (Moscow Spartak, Rus), Tcherisev (Moscow Dinam, Rus), Villarroya (Deportivo). **Out:** Ivan Iglesias (Oviedo), Muniz (Vallecano), Tino, Jose Manuel (Mallorca).

TENERIFE
In: Neuville (Servette, Swi), Rojas (Colo Colo, Chi), Dani (At. Madrid), Pablo Paz (Banfield, Arg). **Out:** Pizzi (Barcelona), Aguilera (Atletico Madrid), Ramis (Sevilla).

VALENCIA
In: Moya (Sevilla), Ivan Campo (Valladolid), Piojo Lopez (Avellenada), Karpin (Sociedad), Vlaovic (Padova). **Out:** Mijatovic (Real Madrid), Mazinho (Celta), Arroyo (released).

VALLADOLID
In: Lozano (America Cali, Col), Victor (Toledo), Pablo (Alves), Ruano (Vallecano). **Out:** Ivan Campo (Valencia), Fonseca (retired), Ivan Rocha (At. Madrid).

ZARAGOZA
In: Radimov (CSKA Moscow, Rus), Almeyda (River Plate, Arg), Rafita (Getafe), Ortuno (Sabadell). **Out:** Gay (Oviedo), Paqui (Hercules), Caceres (Boca Juniors, Arg).

ENGLAND

The new season in Europe

Boom at the top

Keir Radnedge on the financial forces at work in the Premier League

Back home . . . new Forest signing Dean Saunders

THE KEY which unlocked the full financial power of English football was handed over at a time when media and fans were more interested in the imminent attraction of Euro 96.

On June 6 this year, almost unnoticed just two days before the opening match between England and Switzerland, the clubs of the Premier League agreed a British record television contract with the satellite channel BSkyB, which is owned by the Australian media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

Under the terms of the contract, the sports subsidiary of BSkyB – Sky Sports – was granted exclusive rights to show live Premier League matches from August 1997 to May 2001.

In itself this was nothing new. Sky has owned exclusive rights to live Premier League football since 1993. What was new was the size of the cheque: a record £670 million. That meant a stunning 400 per cent increase in the average share per club from the present £2m a year to £8m. It was everybody's Christmas for the next five years, not only come early but all come at once.

Newcastle's stunning world-record capture of Alan Shearer demonstrated the spending power now at the disposal of England's top clubs.

The most successful, such as Man United and Newcastle, may pick up as much as £12m a year from the new deal. The current five-year deal (which expires next spring) is worth £45m a season and the new one £168m.

No wonder even comparatively modest provincial clubs such as Middlesbrough believe it makes financial sense to spend £12.5m in transfer fees and salary on Fabrizio Ravanelli.

Italy, Brazil, Portugal . . . no country's stars are beyond the reach of English clubs now. Not even Germany. Denmark striker Mikkel Beck, for example, is joining Middlesbrough from Fortuna Koln now that a court has ruled a controversial clause in his contract to be an illegal restraint of trade. Manchester United and Tottenham are among clubs now equipped to consider offering the sort of money which would persuade German champions Borussia Dortmund to sell Matthias Sammer.

Stars from all over the world are joining the headlong rush to compete in the Premiership yet foreign players were unknown in English football 20 years ago. The breakthrough was achieved in 1978, when Tottenham Hotspur shocked the game's traditionalists by signing Argentinian World Cup-winners Osvaldo Ardiles and Ricardo Villa.

Not until the advent of satellite television, however, did the game have the financial power to attract more than a sprinkling of foreigners. Until recently the imports had been mostly middle-class eastern Europeans and Scandinavian part-timers – plus the odd idiosyncratic Frenchman (such as Eric Cantona).

But the advent of satellite TV and a five-year deal worth £300m was matched by a realisation within the business community that football clubs can make money – big money.

Tottenham were the first to go public on the London Stock Exchange. For a variety of reasons, the project drove the club to the brink of bankruptcy. But other clubs, learning the lessons of Tottenham's mistakes, got the formula right.

Manchester United, above all.

Today United are quoted on the Stock Exchange and the management has diversified the financial activities of the club so successfully that, for the first time last year, ancillary activities earned more money than matchday gate receipts. These include replica kit, souvenirs, magazine publishing, catering and restaurant services.

The club's overall turnover was £60m with the merchandising section turning over £14.7m. United is valued at around £210m.

On the back of such success, United had no problem redeveloping the North Stand at a cost of a 'mere' £28m. Work was completed in time for Euro 96 and the extra 12,000 seats will provide at least £5m extra in gate receipts every year.

For years English clubs envied the common European system whereby many clubs (such as Milan or Juventus or Roma) play in a stadium owned by the city and pay only rent. Now those same English clubs have realised that stadium ownership provides them with an extra weapon to increase income.

Another avenue for gold-digging within the English game is the kit contract.

The big money no longer emanates from shirt advertisement. That is worth 'only' around £500,000-a-year to even the top clubs. Instead, it is the 'replica' strips which are serious business not only for United but for companies such as Umbro, Reebok, Nike and Adidas.

Reebok's contract with Liverpool could earn the Anfield club as much as £40m over the next five years, marginally more than Manchester United's deal with Umbro which, while also worth around £40m, is spread over six seasons.

United chairman Martin Edwards says: "We did consider going into kit manufacturing ourselves but in the end we decided to stick with the firm who have supplied us with kit for the last four years."

A barometer of English fans' mania for club identification was the revelation that Chelsea sold out their entire first stock of 12,000 'Vialli' shirts within days of the former Juventus player's arrival at Stamford Bridge.

The income thus generated by kit deals alone offers managers such as United's Alex Ferguson and Newcastle's Kevin Keegan the money to fund world-record bids for Alan Shearer.

So far, fear of the effects of the Bosman Judgement is negligible. The big clubs are signing up new players to longer contracts of four and five years, rather than the earlier two and three years. But that is all. So much money is flooding in that few clubs appear to be worried about the long-term financial threat inherent in Bosman.

In the short-term, of course, it is exciting to see the likes of Ravanelli and Vialli flying in. But who knows what the long-term may bring – especially now that Italy is fighting back by introducing a multi-club pay-per-view system at least three years ahead of England?

● What's in a name? The top division in English football is officially known as the Premier League but the competition in which the clubs compete is called the Premiership. This is a stipulation of the overall league sponsorship agreement with the catering and brewing group, Carling. The Carling deal pays the Premier League £12m over four years from 1993 to 1997. The Premier League is a virtually autonomous offshoot of the Football Association.

The lower divisions are run by the Football League, which is a separate legal and corporate company and has just signed a new sponsorship agreement with the Nationwide Building Society.

TEAM BY TEAM

ARSENAL
In: none.
Out: Jensen (Den) (Brondby, Den), Davis (Brentford).
Lack of transfer market activity may be explained by the fact that manager Bruce Rioch is yet to sign a contract. Hard to see how an ageing team can improve on last year, though they will hope for more from Platt this time round.

ASTON VILLA
In: Fernando Nelson (Por) (Sporting, Por).
Out: none.
Nelson, a defender who did not make Portugal's Euro 96 squad, is a direct replacement for Gary Charles, who will be out injured until the New Year. Retaining Yorke is a big boost to their hopes, and they have the bonus of the UEFA Cup to look forward to.

BLACKBURN ROVERS
In: Donis (Gre) (Panathinaikos, Gre).
Out: Shearer (Newcastle), Newell (Birmingham).
After a summer of intense speculation, Rovers lost the battle to hang on to England striker Alan Shearer, a huge blow and they look to have little hope of improving on last season's poor showing. Donis should add pace to the attack, though a Greek has never been tried in England before.

CHELSEA
In: Vialli (Ita) (Juventus, Ita), Di Matteo (Ita) (Lazio, Ita), Leboeuf (Fra) (Strasbourg, Fra).
Out: Furlong (Birmingham), Spackman (Sheffield United), Izzet (Leicester), Hoddle (England coach).
Ruud Gullit steps up to be player-coach, and immediately brings in three top-notch players, in just the positions Chelsea need them. Could mount a serious challenge, especially in the knock-out competitions.

COVENTRY CITY
In: McAllister (Leeds United).
Out: none.
Manager Ron Atkinson's persistence persuaded Scotland skipper McAllister to leave Elland Road, and his promptings from midfield should bring the best out of City's impressive forwards. Question marks over the defence remain, but they are moving in the right direction.

DERBY COUNTY
In: Asanovic (Cro) (Hajduk Split, Cro), Laursen (Den) (Silkeborg, Den), Dailly (Sco) (Dundee Utd, Sco). **Out:** none.
Jim Smith got perhaps the bargain of the summer in Asanovic (£950,000), but the priority will be survival in their first Premier League season. Laursen and Dailly look good buys at the price, and the Rams will have great support in their final season at the Baseball Ground.

EVERTON
In: Speed (Leeds).
Out: Ablett, Horne (Birmingham City).
Speed's arrival should put some zest into the midfield, and if Everton can sort out their attacking line-up, they could be good enough for a European place. Lost out on goalkeeper Nigel Martyn, when he opted for Leeds.

LEEDS UNITED
In: Bowyer (Charlton), Martyn (Crystal Palace), Rush (Liverpool).
Out: Speed (Everton), Masinga (SA) (St Gallen, Swi), McAllister (Coventry).
Wranglings over the ownership of the club have undermined United's cause, with skipper McAllister leaving for a more settled environment. Leeds struggled last term, and things could get worse this time round, though Howard Wilkinson is now virtually unsackable having signed an extended contract. Rush's experience up front should help, while Martyn is a fine keeper.

LEICESTER CITY
In: Izzet (Chelsea).
Out: Roberts (Wolves).
Will start as favourites to go straight back down, and will have to rise collectively above their ability to have any chance.

LIVERPOOL
In: none.
Out: Rush (Leeds Utd).
Yet to make a big signing after interest in Borussia Dortmund's Patrik Berger cooled. May settle for what they have, a fact borne out by the improved contract offered to unsettled midfielder Michael Thomas, who wanted to move to Italy.

MANCHESTER UNITED
In: Solskjar (Nor) (Molde, Nor), Johnsen (Nor) (Besiktas, Tur), Poborsky (Cze) (Slavia Prague, Cze), Raimond van der Gouw (Hol) (Vitesse Arnhem, Hol), Jordi (Hol) (Barcelona, Spa).
Out: Bruce (Birmingham), Coton (Sunderland), Parker (released).
Snubbed by Alan Sheaer, but it's a European invasion at Old Trafford, with Jordi Cruyff the latest signing. The new arrivals will strengthen their Champions League quest, and they remain favourites for the League title too – just.

MIDDLESBROUGH
In: Ravanelli (Ita) (Juventus, Ita), Emerson (Bra) (FC Porto, Bra).
Out: Paul Wilkinson (released).
Boro were goal-shy last season, so Bryan Robson promptly spent £7m on Ravanelli, a bold move entirely in keeping with the new mood fostered by Robson at the Riverside. The defence may still need strengthening, but it should be an exciting season on Teesside.

NEWCASTLE UNITED
In: Shearer (Blackburn).
Out: none.
The £15m world-record capture of Alan Shearer from Blackburn is a monumental boost to Newcastle's title hopes and an indication of how serious they are to make up for the disappointment of last season. They have also hung on to Ginola (he was linked with Barcelona) and must now be strongly favoured to go one better than last season and take the title. Les Ferdinand looks set to return south, possibly to Arsenal, as a result of Shearer's arrival. But that won't dent optimism on Tyneside.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST
In: Jerkan (Cro) (Real Oviedo, Spa), Saunders (Galatasaray, Tur).
Out: Black (Grimsby), Rosario, Webb (retired).
Jerkan's arrival should add solidity to the defence, while Saunders should help a struggling attack. Jason Lee, victim of cruel taunts about his hairstyle last term, has shaved his head and decided to stay . . . a sign of determination at the City Ground?

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY
In: Booth (Huddersfield), Clarke (Rotherham), Lombardo (Juventus).
Out: Kovacevic (Yug) (Real Sociedad, Spa), Degryse (Bel) (PSV, Hol), Woods (New England Revolution, US).
A reorganised forward line could be just what the Owls need after a poor season. Booth is young and promising, Lombardo experienced but expensive (£4m). Promising young keeper Clarke has been brought in to replace Woods, but David Pleat's job will be under threat if Wednesday do not achieve a top-10 finish.

SOUTHAMPTON
In: Souness (manager).
Out: Grobbelaar (Zimbabwe assistant coach), Widdrington (Grimsby), Mark Walters (Swindon), Hall (West Ham), Merrington (manager).
The appointment of Souness is a brave move by the Saints, and he has already said he aims to make Matt Le Tissier England's first-choice midfielder. Hall's out-of-contract move will weaken the defence and a lot of work will have to be done to keep the Saints alive at this level.

SUNDERLAND
In: Rae (Millwall), Coton (Man Utd).
Out: Bennett (Scarborough), Chamberlain (Watford).
Sunderland's first season in the Premier League will also be their last at Roker Park. The club is building a new stadium for 1997-98, so survival will be the priority for Peter Reid's hard-working side. Whether they can survive is debatable.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
In: Nielsen (Den) (Brondby, Den).
Out: Erik Thorstvedt (Nor) (released), Steve Slade (QPR).
Tottenham will be looking for silverware this season, with Anderton back to full fitness, and Denmark's Nielsen added to the midfield. Perhaps more importantly, manager Gerry Francis has signed a two-year contract, the first of his managerial career. Stability + quality = success?

WEST HAM UNITED
In: Bowen (Norwich), Hall (Southampton), Paulo Futre (Por) (Milan, Ita), Florin Raducioiu (Rom) (Espanyol, Spa), Hughes (Strasbourg, Fra).
Out: Gordon (released), Boogers (Hol) (Groningen, Hol), Martin, Sealey (Leyton Orient).
The continental drift has become a flood at Upton Park, with seven foreign players now on the Hammers' books. Defender Hall looks a good recruit, while Futre has signed a no play, no pay deal following speculation about his fitness. West Ham, while not really capable of taking top honours, will have to be taken seriously nonetheless.

WIMBLEDON
In: Thatcher (Millwall), Jupp (Fulham).
Out: Talboys (Watford).
Signed defender Thatcher for a club record £2m, and have resisted the temptation to cash in on ace striker Holdsworth. Pre-season training at a Royal Navy camp means the Dons will be as combative as ever, but they are capable of decent football too. Should provide the usual quota of upsets.

JOHN KELLY

GERMANY

The new season in Europe

Good but not great

Arthur Rotmil on the reaction back home to Germany's Euro Championship-winning side

ALL GERMANY celebrated the European Championship triumph, but away from the euphoria there was the realisation that this was a most ordinary team.

Maybe that's why manager Berti Vogts looked so gloomy right up to the Final, where he masterminded his first major success. Berti's inspirational substitution of Mehmet Scholl with Oliver Bierhoff paid off. Bierhoff, an international only since February, scored both goals against the Czechs.

Vogts has thus joined the illustrious circle of his predecessors, Sepp Herberger, Helmut Schon, Jupp Derwall and Franz Beckenbauer, who all won either the European Championship, or the World Cup, or both. It was Germany's sixth trophy in a record 11th final appearance and a record third European title.

They proved themselves, if not the most brilliant, than at least the most consistent team in the tournament. That in itself was remarkable, for no other squad was so badly hit by injuries and suspensions. No fewer than nine men missed at least one match, so that Vogts could not field his strongest side in any of the six ties.

Despite the constant shuffling the players slotted perfectly into the system – a tribute to their manager's coaching skills. "We were the most consistent side in the pack and deserved to win the title," said Vogts.

Their success over England in a penalty shoot-out was generally expected, for since 1976 the Germans had never lost one. Now they have taken part in four shoot-outs, taking 19 penalties and converting them all.

The Bundesliga, due to start on August 12, will probably once again be dominated by the Big Two, Dortmund and Bayern Munich. Despite winning the UEFA Cup for the first time and thus joining the European elite of clubs who won all three European competitions, the internal squabbles were still simmering at Bayern. Principally the row between team captain Lothar Matthaus and national team captain Jurgen Klinsmann.

Matthaus claims that their differences have nothing to do with the club. "There have always been personality clashes here. Between Beckenbauer and Breitner, or Augenthaler and Reuter," he said. "My complaints against Klinsmann are of a private nature." Klinsmann has been the main objector to his return to the national side.

"If that is true then I shall take Klinsmann to court for defamation of character," Matthaus threatened.

Rumours that Klinsmann is ready to leave Munich have been squashed by the management. It appears that Chelsea, Middlesbrough, Everton, Arsenal and Manchester United, as well as Real Madrid, have either made inquiries about the striker, or been notified that he may become available. But vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge was adamant: "Klinsmann stays in Munich and so does Matthaus."

The veteran Matthaus has extended his contract for another two years and the pair agreed to bury the hatchet after a heart-to-heart talk.

Meanwhile Bayern signed the controversial midfielder Mario Basler from Werder Bremen and returned the Austrian international Andi Herzog to that club. Bayern have also signed striker Carsten Jancker, a German, from Rapid Vienna, while brilliant midfielder Mehmet Scholl signed a new agreement which will keep him in Munich till the year 2002 and Italian striker Ruggiero Rizzitelli joined from Torino *(see profile, below)*.

Champions Borussia Dortmund signed the Portuguese international schemer Paulo Sousa from Juventus.

The biggest headlines were made by Andreas Kopke, Germany's highly-rated keeper at Euro 96. Having left relegated Eintracht Frankfut, he promised Stuttgart he would join them. But then he received a better offer from Barcelona.

Then the Spaniards, worried about Stuttgart's protests, signed Vitor Baia from FC Porto. Kopke eventually joined newly-promoted Marseille in France.

Player profile

Pioneer spirit

Nick Bidwell on Ruggiero Rizzitelli, the first Italian to play in the Bundesliga

FOR THE first time in its 33-year history, the Bundesliga has an Italian in its ranks. The pioneer is striker Ruggiero Rizzitelli, who after 11 seasons with Cesena, Roma and Torino, will be lining up for Bayern Munich.

Rizzitelli's move from relegated Torino to Bayern was just as much a bolt from the blue as the appearances in the Premiership of Vialli, Ravanelli and Di Matteo. Italian professionals once spent their entire careers in the self-contained luxury of Serie A. Now they are playing the emigration game.

"At the age of 28, I didn't fancy a spell in Serie B with Torino," explains Rizzitelli, who has been capped nine times by Italy. "I had a few contacts with Serie A clubs, but the offer from Bayern was by far the most interesting.

"I'm really looking forward to working with Bayern's great Italian coach Giovanni Trapattoni and to testing myself in German football. It's a very competitive league, one of the best in Europe, and I definitely couldn't have chosen a bigger club than Bayern. Here there are internationals in every position. It will be super to link up with the likes of Matthaus, Klinsmann and the rest.

"I don't feel any extra pressure because I'm the only Italian over here. I'm just a new player looking to do well at his new club. Nothing more.

"I still believe I have a lot to offer. I've four or five years of top-class football left in me. Not so very long ago I was the third best goalscorer in Italy and I thought I was worth a call-up to the Italian national team. I will do all I can to be a success at Bayern and prove wrong all those at home who claim I've left Serie A because I'm past my best."

Rizzitelli, however, faces an uphill battle for a first-team slot in Munich. Jurgen Klinsmann and the up-and-coming Alex Zickler are likely to start the new season in the Bayern front-line berths, leaving Rizzitelli and another new boy, the former Rapid Vienna striker Carsten Jancker, to wait for their chance.

With the return of their Euro 96 conquering heroes, the signing of the temperamental and eccentric German international schemer Mario Basler and the arrival of the Italian Connection – Trapattoni in his second spell as coach, and Rizzitelli – a fascinating campaign is in prospect at Bayern Munich.

Bayern buy . . . Italian striker Ruggiero Rizzitelli

TEAM BY TEAM

ARMINIA BIELEFELD
In: Maas (Hol), (Feyenoord, Hol), Rauffmann (Eintracht Frankfurt), Silooy (Hol) (Ajax, Hol), Stenzel (St Pauli).

BAYER LEVERKUSEN
In: Cardoni (Lux) (Jeunesse Esch, Lux), Heintze (Den) (KFC Uerdingen), N Kovac (Hertha Berlin), R Kovac (Nuremberg), Meijer (Hol) (KFC Uerdingen), Nowotny (Karlsruhe), Rydlewicz (Munich 1860).
Out: Lupescu (Bor. Monchengladbach), Munch (Bayern Munich)

BAYERN MUNICH
In: Basler (Werder Bremen), Dreher (KFC Uerdingen), Munch (Bayer Leverkusen), Kuffour (Nuremberg, loan return), Rizzitelli (Ita) (Torino, Ita).
Out: Frey (Freiburg), Herzog (Aut) (Werder Bremen), Kostadinov (Bul) (Fenerbahce, Tur).

VFL BOCHUM
In: Donkov, Engibarov (CSKA Sofia), Mamic (Cro) (Croatia Zagreb, Cro).

BORUSSIA DORTMUND
In: Paulo Sousa (Por) (Juventus, Ita), Schneider (Hansa Rostock).
Out: Franck (Kaiserslautern), Kurz (Schalke), Schmidt (Koln).

BORUSSIA MONCHENGLADBACH
In: H Fournier (Fra) (Guingamp, Fra), Juskowiak (Pol) (Olympiakos, Gre), Lupescu (Rom) (Bayer Leverkusen), Passlack (KFC Uerdingen).
Out: Dahlin (Swe) (AS Roma, Ita).

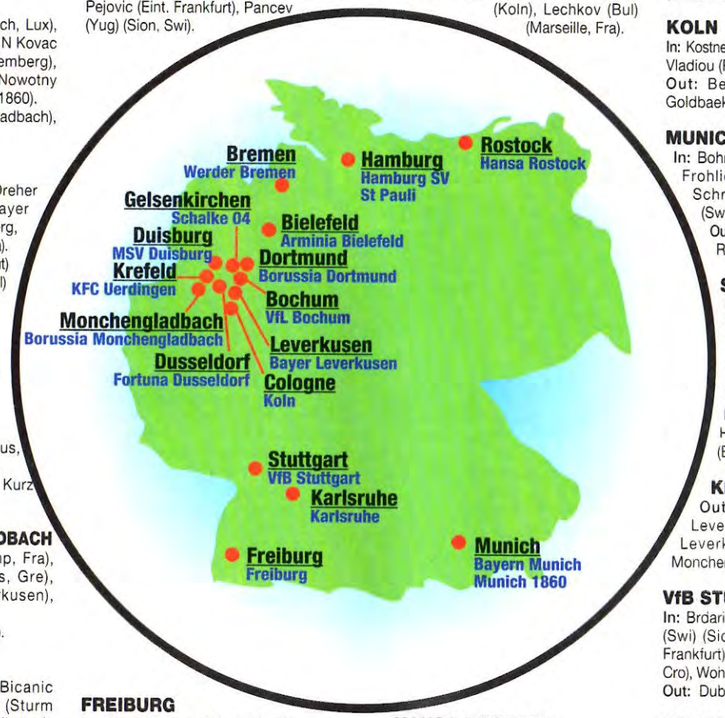
MSV DUISBURG
In: Anders (Kaiserslautern), Bicanic (Cro) (Osijek, Cro), Gill (Nor) (Sturm Graz, Aut), Steffen (KFC Uerdingen), Zeyer (Waldhof Mannheim).
Out: Pieckenhagen (Hansa Rostock), Schutterle (SV Ried, Aut).

FORTUNA DUSSELDORF
In: Nielsen (Den) (Lyngby, Den), Pasic (Yug) (Red Star Belgrade, Yug), Shala (Cro) (Leipzig).
Out: Minkwitz (Stuttgart Kickers), Pejovic (Eint. Frankfurt), Pancev (Yug) (Sion, Swi).

FREIBURG
In: Frey (Bayern Munich), Marasek (Aut) (Rapid Vienna), Wagner (Aut) (Austria Vienna).
Out: Todt (Werder Bremen).

HAMBURG SV
In: Friis-Hansen (Den) (Bordeaux, Fra), Schopp (Aut) (Sturm Graz, Aut), Schupp (Eintracht Frankfurt).
Out: Albertz (Rangers, Sco), Kostner (Koln), Lechkov (Bul) (Marseille, Fra).

HANSA ROSTOCK
In: Pieckenhagen (Duisburg)
Out: Milde (Dynamo Dresden), Schneider (Borussia Dortmund).



KARLSRUHE
In: Hengen (Kaiserslautern), Keller (Fra) (Strasbourg, Fra).
Out: Knup (Swi) (Galatasaray, Tur), Nowotny (Leverkusen), Walter (Stuttgart Kickers).

KOLN
In: Kostner (Hamburg), Schmidt (Dortmund), Vladiou (Rom) (Steaua Bucharest, Rom).
Out: Beiersdorfer (Reggiana, Ita), Goldbaek (Den) (FC Copenhagen, Den).

MUNICH 1860
In: Bohme (Eintracht Frankfurt), Ernst, Frohlich (both Dynamo Dresden), Schroder (Union Berlin), Walker (Swi) (FC Basel, Swi).
Out: Erhard, Keller (both Wolfsburg), Rydlewicz (Bayer Leverkusen).

ST PAULI
In: Duric (FSV Frankfurt).
Out: Caliguiri (US) (Columbus Crew, US), Stenzel (Arminia Bielefeld).

SCHALKE 04
In: De Kock (Hol) (Roda JC, Hol), Kurz (Dortmund), Wilmots (Bel) (Standard Liege, Bel).

KFC UERDINGEN
Out: Heintze (Hol) (Bayer Leverkusen), Meijer (Hol) (Bayer Leverkusen), Passlack (Bor. Monchengladbach), Steffen (Duisburg).

VfB STUTTGART
In: Brdaric (Fort Dusseldorf), S Fournier (Swi) (Sion, Swi), Hagner, Legat (Ein. Frankfurt), Soldo (Cro) (Croatia Zagreb, Cro), Wohlfarth (Aut) (Austria Vienna, Aut).
Out: Dubajic (Yug) (Zeytinburnu, Tur).

WERDER BREMEN
In: Pfeifenberger (Aut) (Saizburg), Todt (Freiburg), Herzog (Bayern).
Out: Basler (Bayern).

Austria

Rapid ready for another record

RAPID VIENNA, who won their record 30th championship last season, were once again favourites for the title when the new season got under way on July 24.

The championship race was decided on the last day when Rapid beat their nearest challengers Sturm Graz 2-0 in front of a remarkable 48,000 crowd in Vienna's Ernst Happel stadium. It was Rapid's first League triumph for eight years.

There was some consolation for Sturm Graz – they won the OFB-Cup for the first time in their history by beating Admira Wacker 3-1. The final was watched by just 9,000 spectators. Local rivals Grazer AK benefitted from Sturm's success – they won a UEFA Cup place – but lost their successful German manager Hans-Ulrich Thomale, who returned home to take over at KFC Uerdingen.

At the bottom of the division Vorwarts Steyr were relegated after a record 42 games without a win.

Rapid failed in their attempt to keep the German striker Carsten Jancker, 21, who was on loan from Germany's Koln and whose six goals propelled the Viennese into the Cup-winners Cup Final. The loan fee was just £40,000, but for an additional £160,000 they could have retained him at least until 1997. Then he would have become a free agent. But Jancker had his sights set on a move to Bayern Munich.

As a result of the Bosman verdict, all restrictions on foreigners have been lifted in Austria, while those out of contract can now change clubs without a transfer fee.

FK Austria, bitterly disappointed about missing out on a UEFA Cup place, fired their German coach Horst Hrubesch. He was replaced by former international Walter Skocik.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Switzerland

Hangover cure sought

SWISS football started the new season still recovering from the hangover of the European Championship. The general opinion was that the Swiss did not fail, but they couldn't raise their game when it mattered and they made no impact on the tournament.

They took a point off England in the opening match, but the equaliser, a penalty by Turkyilmaz, turned out to be their only goal of the tournament.

National coach Artur Jorge parted company with the national federation and looked set to return to the national team job in his native Portugal. criticism of him was not fair considering that a number of players had lost form, while others suffered from injuries which weakened already stretched resources.

Domestic football will be the poorer in view of further departures of top players abroad. In the 1994 World Cup the Swiss had only five internationais in foreign football. At Euro 96 there were nine; this season there are already 12. It is a debilitating development which further reduces Swiss chances in the European club competitions.

Grasshopper were aiming to return to the Champions League, but faced a tough task against Czech title-holders Slavia Prague. Sion represent Switzerland in the Cup-winners Cup, while Neuchatel Xamax and Aarau compete in the UEFA Cup.

The latest moves abroad are: Sebastian Fournier (Sion to VfB Stuttgart); Marco Walker (Basel to 1860 Munich); Ramon Vega (Grasshoppers to Cagliari) and Marco Pascolo (Servette to Cagliari).

Romanian international Dinu Moldovan, who last season hit 19 goals for Neuchatel, has joined Grasshopper.

ARTHUR ROTMIL

Under friendly fire

Andre Duclos looks at the problems facing the national squad after Euro 96

***Apres nous, le deluge?* Well, not quite. Mme. De Pompadour's 18th century words cannot really apply to the aftermath of France's slightly disappointing but far from dishonourable showing in Euro 96.**

If you don't count defeats on penalties, then coach Aime Jacquet's amazing unbeaten run continued. On the other hand, France did progress with a victory on penalties against a Dutch team who, given the state they were in, should have been beaten, surely, in normal time.

What, in the final analysis, went wrong? The overall view was that this French team, for all their fine record and resilience, had neither the brilliance nor the individual stars of the exceptional side who flourished in the late 1970s and early 1980s: the team with Michel Platini as their inspiration.

When Bobby Charlton summed up the competition the day before the Final, he deplored the profusion of penalty finishes, and opined that there was nobody like Platini, capable of opening up a defence, even when the opposition had 10 men back. Quite a compliment from one great player to another.

The 1996 team were probably stronger in defence than their gifted predecessors. They had a superb bulwark in Marcel Desailly, as powerfully effective there as he is in midfield, and Laurent Blanc, who has come back triumphantly after returning to France from his not too happy spell in Naples. So much so that, as we know, he has been picked up, despite being 30-something, by Barcelona.

He thus becomes one of no fewer than 13 of the French 22 in England to have joined a foreign side. This of course is a great tribute to French football and the way it has flourished in recent seasons, but it is a double-edged sword.

Jacquet's hesitation in accepting a new contract after Euro 96 may have had something to do with the fact that so many of his men will now be abroad. Which means infinite journeys to check on them, and the problem of getting them released to play in what will be nothing but friendlies for the next two years.

That of course is another kind of double-edged sword. France have qualified, as hosts, for the 1998 World Cup, but friendlies are now all they can play. At the end of which they must emerge from the fantasy world into the real.

Why did the French attack fail in England? It had much to do with the form of the man expected to be a galvanising factor: Zinedine Zidane. He had played so well and so influentially for club and country that Jacquet was able, or so he thought, to forget about Eric Cantona.

But even before the tournament, Zidane, after all those European club games on top of everything else, was beginning to look tired. He also was involved in a motor accident. So he clearly started the tournament below par, and it showed in his play. We never saw the best of Zidane.

Which brings us to the next point. Will Juventus? The pressure on new foreign players in Italy is always so severe.

Zidane not only has to adjust to a new country and a different club. He will be playing in what amounts largely to a new team.

Parma bound . . . Thuram is heading for Italy

Franck Leboeuf, who found the competition in defence somewhat too hot in England, had his consolation when Chelsea bought him. He is 28 and has not often played for France, but he is an accomplished footballer who can even score goals on occasion.

Although he captained Strasbourg last season, he was born in Marseille. A long apprenticeship with Hyeres, Meaux and Laval followed, before he became international material in Alsace.

Lilian Thuram gained a place in the Euro 96 defence, and showed his versatility by doing so well at right-back, although centre-back probably is his best position. Parma have paid a lot for him, and it will be interesting to see where they use him.

Thuram is 24, and spent his whole French League career with Monaco. He is very strong and very fast, and likes to move into attack. He should do well in Italy.

Will Christophe Dugarry manage to gain a place in the Milan attack, given the superabundance of expensive talent and the inevitable competition for places in what they call The Turnover? And will there be something of a culture shock for the Bordeaux-born attacker, who joined that club as a 10-year-old?

Dugarry's injury may well have cost France a place in the Euro 96 Final. Now, with his skills and opportunism, we must fervently hope that he doesn't go the way of Jean-Pierre Papin, with Milan.

So France need more power in attack, and cannot rely on moments of inspiration from Youri Djorkaeff, playing behind the front line; another French star who will be in Milan this year, with Inter. At Euro 96 he scored a notable goal and set up three others, but we did not quite see him at his best, not least because he did not get the usual support from Zidane.

Had Didier Deschamps, another Juventus man, been fit to play in the semi-final, would things have been different? He had an excellent tournament, and surely will be a great help to Zidane as he faces the problem of adjustment.

Should Eric Cantona and David Ginola have been picked? Hindsight suggests they might have given our attack the extra something that it lacked.

Leaving them out seemed justified at the time. Now perhaps they should return.

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WORLD SOCCER

DENMARK DKR. 44.0
GREECE DRA. 950.0
HOLLAND DFL. 10.9
ITALY L 5800.0
MALTA LM 1.5
SPAIN PTAS. 750.0
USA $ 4.9

Beckham
Chiesa
Crespo
Fish
Kawagushi
Kirovski
Maurice
Obiorah
Rául
Ricken
Ronaldo
Van den Bergh

The new generation

Three years ago WORLD SOCCER correspondents profiled a new generation of young players who were about to make a big impact on the world stage. Those featured included Faustino Asprilla, Dennis Bergkamp and Anthony Yeboah. It's now time to report on the next generation of young superstars – the players who will take world football into the new millenium . . . and beyond.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE MOST PROMISING PLAYERS IN THE WORLD TODAY

The new generation

David Beckham

Manchester United

MORE than a decade ago, David Beckham won a competition at a soccer school run by Bobby Charlton. His prize as the school's most promising youngster was a trip to Barcelona, where he met and trained with the then Barcelona coach Terry Venables.

Venables did not pick Beckham to play for England during his time as coach. But Glenn Hoddle has already named the Manchester United as one of a batch of young players who will play a crucial role in shaping the England team as we head towards the 21st century.

Last season, 21-year-old Beckham was a League and Cup winner with United. Yet the season had begun with many claiming that, after the sale of Paul Ince, Andrei Kanchelskis and Mark Hughes, United would not be capable of challenging for honours. The kids would not be up to it, they said.

United manager Alex Ferguson put his faith in a crop of talented youngsters, all products of the club's youth system – Beckham, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and the Neville brothers, Gary and Philip – and proved everybody wrong.

It was Beckham's first season of regular Premiership action. He had made his debut three years earlier, but his appearances since then had been restricted to minor Cup games and, as an Englishman, the Champions League.

Beckham was born in East London, and resisted attempts by Tottenham to sign him as a trainee. He wanted to join United, who he had supported from an early age.

In the spring of 1995, Beckham moved to Third Division Preston North End on a three-month loan. He excelled himself at Deepdale, as Preston's promotion push gained momentum. Then injuries and suspensions forced Alex Ferguson to recall him to Manchester. Beckham was thrown into the starting line-up against Leeds. He has not looked back. His winning goal against Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-final capped a fine season.

His displays on the right side of United's midfield, where it was thought the team would miss Kanchelskis, impressed everybody. The intelligence of his play suggests it will not be long before he adds full England honours to his Under-21 and youth caps.

GAVIN HAMILTON

Enrico Chiesa

Parma and Italy

IF THERE was a positive note to emerge from Italy's European Championship debacle, it came from the brief but exhilarating performances of Enrico Chiesa.

His opportunism, pace and then finishing in the creation and scoring of Italy's temporary equaliser in the fatal 2-1 defeat by the Czech Republic let the rest of the world see for themselves just what a prodigious talent he has become.

Scorer of 22 goals last season for Sampdoria, Chiesa had been called into the Euro 96 squad almost by plebiscite. Indeed, one of the most regular criticisms levelled at Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi in the post-Euro wake was that he had made too little use of the brilliant Chiesa, too late in the day.

Chiesa, equipped with explosive pace, is able to hit 30-yard, top-corner 'sizzlers' with either foot and is equally effective as a wide midfielder-cum-winger or as a central striker. He was, of course, the most expensive Italian club purchase of the summer when Parma bought him for £10m, while offering him a five-year contract worth an annual £1m, after tax.

It remains to be seen just how Chiesa will cope with his new found responsibilities and notoriety. This time last year, he was just another number, a player repurchased by Sampdoria (he is Genoa-born) from Cremonese.

This season, he will be expected to lead a badly-needed Parma revival.

Now 25 years old, Chiesa appears to have arrived relatively late in his first-class career. Injuries and the lack of a serious chance with a top team may have blocked him in the past while weight training and new found confidence have seen his game improve remarkably in the last two seasons.

The non-Italian fan might be tempted to think the Chiesa phenomenon is merely more soccer hype. If so, just listen to what Sampdoria's experienced Swedish coach, Sven Goran Eriksson, has to say: "For his pace, technique and sharpshooting, Chiesa is the best Italian striker of the moment. He's a player of pure class, one of the best I've ever coached."

PADDY AGNEW

Hernan Crespo
Parma and Argentina

HE IS 20, he is Argentine and he has just cost Italian club Parma a touch over £3million. Hernan Crespo is the new golden boy of Argentine football.

He follows a dangerous path marked out by the disparate likes of Angel Rojas, Norberto Alonso, Diego Maradona, Claudio Caniggia and Ariel Ortega. Indeed, his very potential has already robbed him of an early place on a world stage.

Crespo scored the decisive goal with which Argentina's greatest club, River Plate, defeated America of Cali in the final of the South American Club Cup, the Copa Libertadores.

By rights, he should be leading River out against Juventus in the World Club Cup Final in Tokyo at the end of November. But so intense has been the competition for his signature, that Parma pounced immediately the final was over. Crespo will be playing against Juventus later this year – but in Serie A.

Crespo made his League debut with River on November 8, 1933, and has scored 27 goals in 65 championship matches plus another nine in 13 appearances for Argentina's Olympic team on the way to Birmingham, Alabama.

He was a League champion with River Plate in 1994 and duly voted Young Player of the Year – achievements which prompted national coach Daniel Passarella to hand him a senior international debut against Bulgaria in February of last year.

Nicknames for him – in the Argentine tradition – proliferate. His height and easy movement across the breadth of attack earned him the label of 'Valdanito' after the 1986 World Cup hero from Real Madrid. More recently, his happy knack of scoring vital goals drew other comparisons and a tag of 'the new Batistuta'.

His coaches at River Plate, first Carlos Babington and most recently Ramon Diaz, believe Crespo has all the qualities needed to emulate their own achievements and star in future World Cups.

Crespo is not short on self-belief, either. He says: "I'm sure I will succeed in European football. I have great confidence in my own ability. When I go to sleep at night I dream of all the goals I'm going to score."

KEIR RADNEDGE

Mark Fish
Lazio and South Africa

THE 22-year-old Mark Fish this season becomes the first South African to play in Serie A since Eddie Firmani in the 1950s.

Firmani, who was a big favourite at Charlton Athletic and recently became the first coach to be sacked in the new American MLS, went on to play for Italy, but Fish already is an established international with 19 caps for South Africa.

Add to that, triumph in the African Nations Cup Final in January and an African Champions Cup medal with former club Orlando Pirates late last year, and Fish is an experienced campaigner at international level.

Going to Italy, however, will be a whole new level for the tall defender, who started his career in South Africa's First Division as a striker and still gets picked occasionally for club and country in the midfield.

He is not expected to be an immediate starter but Lazio will quickly find Fish is a young man of immense heart, with strength and bags of confidence.

He might need a little refining around the edges but he will give all for the club, as his scar-filled face shows. Fish has the physical presence to make an impact in Europe. He is 6ft 4in and growing bigger.

In South Africa, the pond had grown too small for Fish. "South African football is not at the standard it should be and if we are serious about being recognised as a force in the world, we'll have to pick it up," he says.

Fish started his career as a Junior at Arcadia, a Pretoria-based club once the haunt of Roy Wegerle. His First Division debut, though, came at 18 with Jomo Cosmos, where coach Roy Matthews had such an influence on his career that Fish paid him back by taking him to New York in July for the World XI match against Brazil.

Fish played there alongside his hero, Marcel Desailly, and set something of a world record. He played the first half for the team, was substituted at the break but went on again for Desailly in the final five minutes.

After Cosmos were relegated in 1993, Fish moved to Orlando Pirates, who won the League for the first time in 20 years the next season. Now Lazio beckons, and there is an ocean of opportunity for a youngster with the world at his feet.

MARK GLEESON

The new generation

Florian Maurice

Lyon

FRANCE's Euro 96 challenge was ultimately undermined by the lack of a natural predator to lead their frontline. Olympique Lyon's Florian Maurice might well be the answer to national coach Aime Jacquet's prayers.

"With respect to guys like Dugarry and Loko, who are more attacking foils, I think France were crying out for a genuine goalscorer in England," says former France and Bordeaux playmaker Alain Giresse.

"We needed someone with presence in front of goal, a really clinical finisher. I would have gone for a Cyrille Pouget or a Florian Maurice. Guys who know where the goal is.

"Maurice's goalscoring record speaks for itself. Over the past couple of years he's got 30-odd goals. Not too many other strikers can say the same.

"Look at the calm way he took his goal in Lyon's victory against Lazio in the UEFA Cup last season. Italian defences aren't known as generous. Maurice made scoring against them look easy. He's a born striker."

The 22-year-old Maurice's pedigree is certainly impressive. A star of France's Olympic and Under-21 teams and the scorer of 15 and 18 goals in the last two French championships, Maurice is a frontrunner of sublime skills.

With quick feet, mobility and the assured touch of a penalty-area assassin, he is Jean-Pierre Papin revisited in so many ways. However, unlike JPP, Maurice supplies more than his share of assists.

No doubt young Maurice can count himself fortunate to have received a footballing education at one of France's premier youth set-ups. Lyon have invested heavily in nurturing their own talent, and it was no accident that last season, Maurice was one of 10 homegrown youngsters in the club's first-team squad.

Despite being under contract to Lyon until the year 2000, Maurice's name was linked during the summer with Marseille, Paris Saint-Germain, plus a number of Spanish and Italian outfits. But nothing materialised from the rumours and he starts his fifth season in the Lyon first team.

"For the moment I'm happy at Lyon," he says. "We have a very promising young team, with an average age of 23, and we can do a lot better than the mid-table position we managed last term. The season before last we finished runners-up. We aim to return to the top places.

"I'm ambitious and want to play at the highest level possible. If I receive an interesting offer from a leading French or foreign side, we'll see what happens. But that's for tomorrow.

"About a year ago, I said I though I was too young to play for the senior French team and I remember my ex-Lyon teammate Manuel Amoros telling me not to be so stupid.

"He said if I was good enough, age was not important. He was right. I shall be going all out to get into Aime Jacquet's side as soon as I can."

NICK BIDWELL

James Obiorah

Anderlecht

IN BELGIUM, they are treating James Obiorah in much the same way as Alex Ferguson did with Ryan Giggs at Manchester United.

The reason is the 18-year-old Nigerian (born August 24, 1978) is the latest in Anderlecht's ever-increasing production line of fine African talent.

First came Nii Lamptey Odartey, the Ghanaian wunderkind who got the rules bent to play in the Belgian First Division at 16 and scored furiously in his first season before going on a downward spiral.

Next came Yaw Preko (a moderate success when not injured) and Isaac Asare (unable to command a first-team place) and Nigerian full-back Celestine Babayaro, now an established first-teamer and international in the making.

The latest product promises to be the bet of the lot, and Anderlecht are making sure none of the considerable attention his compatriots received before him will bear negatively on the young talent.

"Lamptey couldn't carry the burden of success and Anderlecht must take some blame for that. If we had looked better after him off the field, maybe he wouldn't have fallen off the track," says club official Jean Dockx.

So Obiorah is being brought along gently, having been drafted into the first-team squad in January when the squad went to Morocco for a training camp and mini-tournament also involving Dutch club Feyenoord.

Obiorah was taken along just for the experience but made his debut on the tour with enough of a showing to convince coach Johan Boskamp that he is, indeed, one for the future.

He is from Aba in Nigeria and played as a junior at Enyimba, Plateau United and Kwara Bombers before Anderlecht gave him a trial on the advice of Churchill Oliseh, elder brother of Nigerian international midfielder Sunday Oliseh.

Last year Obiorah played for Nigeria's Under-17 team in the African Championships in Mali, where they finished second and he was the team's top scorer, and again at the World Championships in Ecuador several months later. At that tournament, Nigeria were surprisingly eliminated in the quarter-finals. "It was the saddest experience of my life," said Obiorah.

But success has come rapidly since then. He scored his first League goal on the team's return from Morocco to Belgium against Mechelen, and towards the end of last season he was getting regular games.

"The most important thing is to fit into the team as best possible," adds Obiorah. "I want to learn as much a I can. I regard this year as my learning year and from 1997 I want to have a fixed place in the first team. And I will do everything possible to achieve that."

MARK GLEESON

Jovan Kirovski

United States

MANCHESTER UNITED scoured Europe for new talent this summer, but one overseas player they thought they already owned could be plying his trade elsewhere on the Continent this season.

Jovan Kirovski, the 20-year-old American striker, had a summer to remember, but it ended in double disappointment. Two days after he scored a glorious curling free-kick to send the US on their way to victory over Tunisia in the Olympics, his dreams of a gold medal and a contract at United disappeared.

A 1-1 draw with Portugal sent the US out of the tournament. Then Kirovski was hit by the news that he had been denied a work permit by the British authorities, despite an appeal after the second application had failed.

"I talked with the United manager Alex Ferguson and he told me the appeal was denied," explained Kirovski, who was named Man of the Match in the USA's 3-1 defeat against Argentina.

"I'm going home to California to take a break. Then I'll start talking to clubs in Holland and Germany."

Kirovski was born in Macedonia but brought up in San Diego. He first caught the eye of United scouts when he came on a UK tour with his youth team. He emigrated to England and spent four years progressing through the United youth scheme.

He scored more than a goal a game in the third team in 1994-95 and was the reserves' top scorer with 20 goals last season as they lifted the Pontins League championship. But still Kirovksi knew his career chances relied on the work permit.

Officials are only prepared to offer permits to established internationals, and at only 20 years old, Kirovski's 17 caps was an impressive but insufficient total.

Ferguson flew down to London to meet Home Office officials in a special bid to overturn the decision. "He is ready to go into the first team," said Ferguson. "Unfortunately we just can't get the work permit. It's really unfair on the lad."

"It has held up my career and been very frustrating," admitted Kirovski. "I love Manchester United, but it seems I just didn't have enough international caps to stay there."

Kirovski has decided against moving to the US Major League and is determined to get experience in top flight European football.

His potential is unquestioned. And with his goalscoring record, he could well come back to face United in European competition very soon.

GAVIN WILLACY

Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi

Kashima Antlers and Japan

WHEN Mario Zagallo said that his Olympic team had been beaten by the Japanese goalkeeper, he was sounding a familiar refrain.

It is rare for a 20-year-old to make such a stir between the posts, but you need talent to keep a clean sheet against nearly 30 shots from the likes of Bebeto and Savio, which is what Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi did against Brazil.

Kawaguchi's talent was already well known in Brazil. He took the royal road to success in Japanese football, playing at the powerhouse of Japanese school football, Shimizu Commercial Senior High, with the likes of future national team midfielder Hiroshi Nanami.

Shimizu gave Brazil its first exposure to Kawaguchi at a training camp when he was 16 and a youth international. Edinho, the Gremio goalkeeping coach, was sufficiently impressed to ask the school to leave the boy in Brazil.

The school refused, but invited Edinho to coach their pupils in Japan. He agreed, and in 1994, when Kawaguchi joined Yokohama Marinos, Edinho followed him there, too.

Kawaguchi had offers from seven J.League clubs, but chose Marinos in order to play under the regular national team keeper, Shigetatsu Matsunaga.

That hardly seemed like a direct route to first-team glory, but last year, when Jorge Solari took over as coach at Marinos, he gave Matsunaga only 10 League games before picking Kawaguchi. This caused a row that ended in Matsunaga's split with both Marinos and the Japan national team.

Kawaguchi was calmness itself, keeping a clean sheet for his first five League games. Marinos won the first stage, then the championship, too, Kawaguchi was voted the J.League's Rookie of the Year for 1995.

Sadly, Solari fell ill and resigned, but his goalkeeping decision was possibly his greatest contribution to the club's championship year.

Kawaguchi was again the hero in the Olympic qualifiers in Malaysia this year, especially in the crucial semi-final with Saudi Arabia.

The most remarkable thing about Kawaguchi is that he makes it all look so easy. Even Bebeto ended up shooting straight at his chest almost every time. He is also swift off his line, using the entire area with the confidence of a veteran. His own most-used term in interviews is "imaging" – he never stops turning over match scenes in his head.

All his efforts of the past two years were aimed at the Olympics. "We produced it all today, everything we have been playing for," he said after the win over Brazil.

So what lies in store for the goalkeeper with everything? "I haven't any image for after the Olympics," he said. "I'm the sort of person who does one thing at a time. It's not right to be greedy."

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

The new generation

Rául
Real Madrid

DURING THE build-up to Euro 96, there were more stories in the Spanish press bemoaning the absence of 'Rául' Gonzalez Blanco than about any of the 22 seasoned professionals who made it to England – such is the impact the 19-year-old has made in less than two seasons at Real Madrid.

The coach, Javier Clemente, always insisted that Rául's place was in Atlanta with the rest of Spain's brat-pack, defending Olympic Gold. However the big boys' failure to capitalise on their impressive approach work against England suggests he should have taken a chance.

Clemente, however, remains unrepentant. "Rául is destined to make his mark on a whole generation, and not just in Spanish football. But at his age he's got to take things one step at a time."

The boy himself would no doubt disagree; he has a sweet left foot, but Rául's defining quality is bare-faced cheek. Fear is not part of this kid's vocabulary.

A week after becoming Real's youngest debutant at 17 years and four months, he needed just 45 minutes of an October 1994 derby against Atletico Madrid (one goal and two magical assists for a 3-0 lead) to confirm his arrival in the big time. Pretty mindblowing stuff after a pit-stop of just a single game in the reserves, you'd think? "Well, it was one of the most important games I've played in," said the laidback youngster, "but no I wasn't nervous at all!"

That first campaign ended with a championship medal, but it was last season when Rául really proved why he is special. Nineteen League goals and six more in Europe (earning a place on UEFA's Champions League XI) were the main reasons Madrid's season was merely disappointing and not a historical disaster. This despite the January sacking of the youngster's mentor, Jorge Valdano.

Rául described Valdano's departure as "the saddest day of my life". Not surprisingly the Argentinian coach remains a fan. "Rául has that uncanny knack of creating something out of nothing – if there's a short cut to goal he'll find it. and I've never met a kid who's so singleminded. I once told him I was resting him for a game and he replied, 'Well, I suppose you know what you're doing, but if you want to win you'll have to bring me on!' Needless to say, in the second half he came off the bench and scored the winner."

JEFF KING

Ronaldo
Barcelona and Brazil

RONALDO – or Ronaldinho as he has been rebaptised back home in South America – is a Very Important Player.

He must be: he has just cost a record fee for a Brazilian footballer in quitting PSV Eindhoven for the excitement of Spanish football.

The 19-year-old centre-forward was always going to the bright lights and hothouse atmosphere of Spanish or Italian football. The questions were: when and to whom? At first Italy's Internazionale were at the head of the queue after Ronaldo spent the best part of a week in Milan as their guest last summer. Inter even paid PSV for first option should the Dutch club decide to sell.

PSV did not want to – either then or now. But two factors forced their hand. First came the Bosman judgment and the threat it posed to PSV's investment in Ronaldo. Then complications of a personal nature reduced Ronaldo's long-term commitment to the club.

It says everything for Ronaldo's power and skill – the potential which earned him a place in Brazil's 1994 World Cup-winning squad – that possible purchasers were not put off by knee trouble which kept him out of action for most of the second half of this past season. Surgery and rest were prescribed so that Ronaldo would be fit to play for Brazil at the Olympic Games finals.

In the meantime Inter and Barcelona had gone to auction over the price. Barcelona agreed to meet PSV's valuation of £12.5m while Inter, given the chance to compete, pulled back. Joan Gaspart, the Barcelona vice-president who commands all the transfer action, moved quickly to negotiate a six-year contract which will earn Ronaldo around £8m before bonuses.

Ronaldo was then 'free' to concentrate on the Olympic Games and hope manager Mario Zagallo would offer him the opportunity to exercise a talent which has already turned him into the third most expensive player of all time, behind Newcastle's Alan Shearer and Milan's Gianluigi Lentini.

KEIR RADNEDGE

Lars Ricken
Borussia Dortmund

FEW SCHOOLKIDS can claim to have played in a professional championship-winning team. But Borussia Dortmund's attacking sensation Lars Ricken has already appeared in two.

Ricken has achieved the remarkable balancing act of starring in Dortmund's 1994-95 and 1995-96 Bundesliga triumphs, while successfully completing his high-school studies – Italian and History being his best subjects. It was quite a feat: no wonder the 20-year-old is regarded as a role model by so many youngsters in Germany.

"We have known for some time now that Lars was a very special talent," says Dortmund coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. "He has good pace, amazing ball-control and finishes like a dream.

"He is also very versatile, able to play in midfield or up front. When Karlheinz Riedle and Stephane Chapuisat suffered serious knee injuries the season before last, I had no hesitation in using Lars in attack and he filled in wonderfully for us. However, I would say his best position is probably just behind the two strikers. He is so dangerous when making late runs into the box.

"If you have an extremely gifted young player, it's natural to want to protect him, to ensure he doesn't burn himself out. But I have no fears about Lars. He is so mature for his years and takes everything in his stride. There's no question he is going to have a tremendous career."

It takes some doing to shine in a side with such luminaries as Matthias Sammer, Riedle, Jurgen Kohler, Julio Cesar and Andy Moller. But that's just what Ricken has managed on a regular basis, stealing their thunder with his precocious skills.

A perfect illustration of his ability to upstage his elders came in Dortmund's third round UEFA Cup tie against Deportivo La Coruna in December 1994. With four minutes to go in extra time and needing two goals to go through, Borussia looked dead and buried. But Riedle and Ricken both scored and saw the German side home amid scenes of mass hysteria.

"The La Coruna game was the best moment of my career," recalls Ricken. "Firing in the winner in the last minute of extra time was unbelievable. The roar of our crowd when my goal when in was amazing."

Ricken is a regular for his country's Under-21s and for many in Germany, it is not a matter of if he makes the full national side, but when. Within a couple of years seems a good bet.

"I feel like I'm living in a dream," says Ricken. "Apart from the Under-21s failure to qualify for the Atlanta Olympics, little has gone wrong for me in my short time as a footballer.

"It was already a great thrill for a born and bred Dortmunder like me to break into the club's first team. Now I have played in two Bundesliga-winning campaigns, appeared in European club competition against fantastic sides such as Juventus and Ajax and been selected for the German Under-21 team. It's a lot to take in. I have been very lucky." Modest and gifted.

NICK BIDWELL

Dave Van den Bergh
Ajax Amsterdam

DAVE VAN DEN BERGH is not one of those names which sparks instant recognition among European fans – not even, indeed, among fans in Holland.

Yet the 20-year-old winger is the latest protege of the Ajax youth school who is about to find himself saddled with the responsibility of impossible comparison. Every Ajax starlet has had to bear it: he becomes the 'new Cruyff', or the 'new Bergkamp'.

Van den Bergh's skill, pace and ingenuity out on the wing are a guarantee that the depth of talent is not in danger of drying up. The care with which he has been protected shows that Ajax have learned the lessons of allowing their youngsters too much freedom too soon. No sooner had Clarence Seedorf earned a teenage reputation than he was off to Sampdoria in Italy.

Now they are reluctant even to release a photograph of Van den Bergh to go with this article.

Ajax coach Louis Van Gaal thought hard about promoting Van den Bergh when Marc Overmars was seriously injured midway through last season. He decided, instead, to go out and buy Peter Hoekstra from PSV Eindhoven. But Hoekstra could well find himself pushed back in the wing queue this coming season with Van den Bergh on the left and Overmars, now fit again, on the right.

Van den Bergh had played just three League games when he was brought to the fringe of the regular first-team squad for the closing stages of last season's Champions League campaign.

He did not play in Europe . . . but that gap in his footballing education is likely to be rectified very shortly. Then the rest of Europe will soon know his name – and his face!

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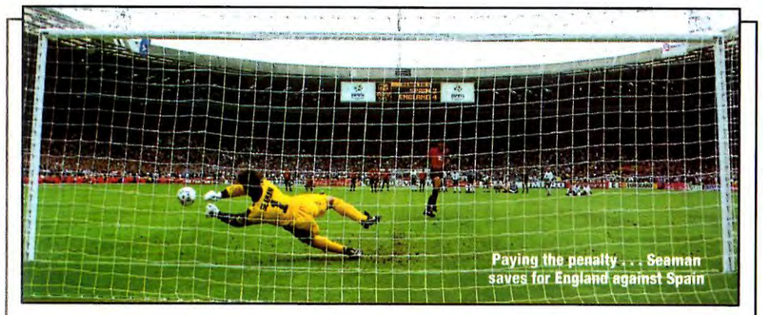

Paying the penalty . . . Seaman saves for England against Spain

Penalties - there has to be a better way . . .

I was proud to see England do so well at Euro 96. But watching Holland, France and England eliminated on penalty kicks and the disappointment of the players, I started to think about a better way to decide the outcome of the game, one which allows for the whole team's performance. This is my suggestion:

Phase 1: Golden goal – 30 minutes of extra time. First goal to decide the winner.

Phase 2 : Shots at goal. This is the result of a team effort and shots on goal would be divided into two categories.

1 – Good shots on goal, eg where a goalkeeper has to punch or deflect the ball from going in the net; catch a hard shot or header; dive to save or to cradle the ball in his arms from a fierce shot.

Category 2 – Weak half-hit shots on goal.

An independent accessor from FIFA could view the game and log the statistics. Their decision would be final.

I believe this would work because the outcome would be decided on a team effort. This system could also increase the attacking play which would benefit the game. I think I speak on behalf of soccer fans all over the world when I say we are tired and fed up with penalty shoot outs. I predict that in the World Cup Final in France in 1998, England will beat Portugal 3-2 after extra time !

– JAMES McFADDEN

● Interesting ideas though not original. No-one likes penalty shoot-outs but at least everyone knows that both teams start the process all-square. Qualified approval!

After enduring the knock-out stages of Euro 96 with four penalty shoot-outs, plenty of sterile extra-time and no Golden goals.

I believe I have the answer to the dilemma of deciding drawn games.

If the game is tied after 90 minutes, have a penalty shoot-out. Then play 30 minutes extra-time. If the teams are still tied, the team who won the penalty competition are the winners.

This system would mean that the team who lost the shoot-out would have to score to win the game. It would also de-emphasise the importance of misses in the shoot-out.

I'm sure Seedorf would not have cried if he had had 30 minutes to make up for his error. It is a much fairer and exciting way of doing it.

– ROBERT MOORE

● The moment you put the decider in ahead of the game you immediately unbalance the contest and offer one team a tangible reward for negative football. Not in favour.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that the penalty shoot-out system is having a detrimental effect on the game. The exciting 1994 World Cup will be remembered for the awful drawn final and the recent Euro 96 tournament highlighted the negative aspects of the shoot-out.

Here in Australia, where the game is struggling to get a foothold, the shoot-out and lack of goals in big matches is ridiculed.

There is something drastically wrong with a system which punishes positive attacking play and rewards the negative.

I have detailed a solution for deciding drawn matches, which I believe, will guarantee that the deserving team wins. Furthermore, the proposal will make Fair Play a decisive element in each match.

Proposal: Three positive elements of the game are rewarded with points and three negative ones are punished. At the end of extra time in a drawn game, the points are tallied and the team with the highest total will win.

If points are equal then the match should be awarded to the team with the better disciplinary record in the match or, if still equal, the tournament.

Each team would be awarded points as follows:

Shots on target (saved, hit woodwork) – 5 points each.

Shots not on target (miss the goal, but cross the goal line) – 2 points each.

Corners – 1 point each.

Each team would have points deducted as follows:

Fouls committed (free kick awarded to opponents) – Minus 1 point each.

Players booked – Minus 2 points each.

Players sent off – Minus 5 points each.

The points system is designed to combat the negative tactics employed by many teams today. Neutralising your opponent will no longer be an advantage, but playing the game skilfully and fairly will give you a decisive edge in competition.

– STEVE HARRISON

● Complex but interesting. FIFA would probably love to make the fairplay element decisive in helping resolve drawn matches in the knock-out stages of tournaments. Two caveats: the fairplay element would have to be only the record in the match in question or one team starts with a built-in advantage; secondly, how do you cater for the unseen pressures which mean the away team generally appears to commit more fouls than the home team?

World Cup prospects

As a Yugoslav student in Malaysia, I was very happy that sporting sanctions against my country were lifted in November 1994. After a series of low-key friendlies, we are finally back in competition in the World Cup qualifiers. I would like to have your opinion on the following topics:

1. Can Yugoslavia manage to qualify for the World Cup Finals in 1998?
2. Can the standard set by the national team during the World Cup 90 qualifiers be achieved again?
3. Do you think that players such as Savicevic, Jugovic, Stojkovic, Mijatovic, Pantic, and Petkovic will be able to able to gell and play well as a unit?
4. Will the above mentioned players finally get the type of recognition their undoubted talents deserve?
5. Will clubs such as Red Star and Partizan manage to re- establish themselves as top clubs in Europe?

– SRDJAN DJERIC

● Yugoslavia's national team have a lot of ground to make up and a much more restricted pool of players from which to choose than four years ago. It will take time to rebuild the team, no matter the quality of Slav players in exile. Red Star and Partizan, no longer protected from raiding western clubs (as they were when a player had to be least 28 to gain a transfer permit) will struggle to regain their previous status.

Fueling the flames

I accept the coincidence of Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia being drawn together in the same qualifying group in the 1998 World Cup. However, I recall how a war broke out between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969-70 arising from a World Cup qualifying game

Would it have been better, in view of the political uncertainty in the former Yugoslavia, if the newly-independent nations had been separated in the draw?

– LAU LAP NGAI

● Let's look at it from the positive side and hope that football contact – as has often been the case – can help to lower tensions in the region.

Books

EURO 96 has come and gone but that does not mean that all those publications surrounding the event are of no further use. Some of the statistical guides will go on being of great value.

One such still available is the *Player Profile Pack* produced by Terry O'Neill and Angus Loughran and which details each and every international match played by all the participating players at Euro 96 – plus a great more info. Available priced £30 from 139 The Stour, Grange, Daventry, Northants NN11 4PU.

WORLD SOCCER is constantly bombarded with queries about the most esoteric details of football in the Americas. Devotees of the game in that long continent will enjoy the North and Latin American Yearbook produced by Serge Van Hoof and which provides club squad information for all of South America and detailed reviews of the club game in Central and North America. Inquiries to Heart Books, Oude Booischotsebaan 19, 2820 Rijmenam, Belgium.

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Enter the host country for the 1998 World Cup in slot (1). Enter the defending champion at the 1998 World Cup in slot (2).

CONCACAF - North America, Central America, Caribbean - 30 Countries : **3** Qualify ; Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, United States exempt until Semifinal.

First Round — Caribbean Zone - Home and Away : 4 Winners Advance: Game A - Aruba vs. Dominican Republic
Game B - Bahamas vs. St. Kitts/Nevis | Game C - Grenada vs. Guyana | Game D - Antigua vs. Dominica

Second Round — Caribbean Zone - Home and Away : 8 Winners Advance: Winner Game A vs. Netherlands Antilles | Winner Game B vs. St. Lucia
Winner Game C vs Haiti | Winner Game D vs. Barbados | Bermuda vs. Trinidad/Tobago | Cayman Islands vs. Cuba
Jamaica vs. Surinam | Puerto Rico vs. St. Vincent

Third Round — Caribbean Zone - Home and Away : 4 Winners Advance to Semifinals
Central American Zone - Home and Away : 2 Winners Advance to Semifinals: Belize vs. Panama | Guatemala vs. Nicaragua

Semifinals — Double Round Robins Within 3 Groups of 4 Teams : Top 2 Teams in Each Group Advance:
Group 1: Costa Rica, United States, Winner of Caribbean Third Round Game, Winner of Guatemala-Nicaragua
Group 2: Canada, El Salvador, Winner of Caribbean Third Round Game, Winner of Belize-Panama
Group 3: Honduras, Mexico, Winners of 2 Caribbean Third Round Games

Finals — 6 Teams - Double Round Robin - Top 3 Qualify

Enter your Choices to qualify from CONCACAF in slots (3), (4) and (5).

SOUTH AMERICA - 9 Countries: **4** Qualify. One group will play a double round robin.
Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

Enter your choices to qualify from SOUTH AMERICA in slots (6), (7), (8), and (9).

AFRICA - 36 Countries: **5** Qualify - Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria exempt from first round.

First Round — Home and Away : Winners Advance: Algeria vs. Kenya | Angola vs. Uganda | Burkina Faso vs. Mauritania | Burundi vs. Sierra Leone
Congo vs. Ivory Coast | Gabon vs. Swaziland | Gambia vs. Liberia | Ghana vs. Tanzania | Guinea vs. Guinea-Bissau
Madagascar vs. Zimbabwe | Malawi vs. South Africa | Mauritus vs. Zaire | Mozambique vs. Namibia | Rwanda vs. Tunisia
Senegal vs. Togo | Sudan vs. Zambia

Second Round — 16 Winners plus Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco, and Nigeria will be drawn into 5 groups of 4 teams each. Group winners qualify.

Enter your choices to qualify from AFRICA in slots (10), (11), (12), (13), and (14).

EUROPE - 49 Countries: **14** Qualify - The 49 countries are divided into 9 groups, which play a double round robin. The 9 group winners plus the best second-place finisher qualify. The remaining 8 second-place finishers will be drawn into pairs for home-and-away playoffs. Playoff winners advance.

Group 1	Bosnia-Hergozovina, Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia	**Enter winner of Europe Group 1 in slot (15)**
Group 2	England, Georgia, Italy, Moldova, Poland	**Enter winner of Europe Group 2 in slot (16)**
Group 3	Azerbaijan, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Switzerland	**Enter winner of Europe Group 3 in slot (17)**
Group 4	Austria, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Scotland, Sweden	**Enter winner of Europe Group 4 in slot (18)**
Group 5	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Israel, Luxembourg, Russia	**Enter winner of Europe Group 5 in slot (19)**
Group 6	Czech Republic, Faroe Islands, Malta, Slovakia, Spain, Yugoslavia	**Enter winner of Europe Group 6 in slot (20)**
Group 7	Belgium, Netherlands, San Marino, Turkey, Wales	**Enter winner of Europe Group 7 in slot (21)**
Group 8	Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania	**Enter winner of Europe Group 8 in slot (22)**
Group 9	Albania, Armenia, Germany, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Ukraine	**Enter winner of Europe Group 9 in slot (23)**

Enter your choices for Europe Second Place Qualifiers in slots (24), (25), (26), (27), and (28).

ASIA - 36 Countries: **3** Qualify plus **1** team into home-and-away playoff with OCEANIA Winner.

First Round — Each country has been drawn into 1 of 10 groups. Each group will decide its own system of play.

Group 1	Bangladesh, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan	Group 6	Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand
Group 2	Iran, Kirghizistan, Maldive Islands, Syria	Group 7	Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore
Group 3	Bahrain, Jordan, United Arab Emirates	Group 8	China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Vietnam
Group 4	Japan, Macao, Nepal, Oman	Group 9	Iraq, Kazakhstan, Pakistan
Group 5	Cambodia, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Yemen	Group 10	India, Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka

Second Round — The 10 group-winners will be drawn into 2 groups of 5 teams each. Each group will play a single round-robin tournament at a neutral site. The top 2 in each group advance.

Semifinals — Semifinal winners qualify.

Playoff — Semifinal losers play off. Winner qualifies. Loser goes into playoff with OCEANIA.

Enter your choices to qualify from Asia in slots (29), (30), and (31).

OCEANIA - Zone winner goes into playoff with ASIA playoff loser. Winner qualifies.

First Round — League system. Melanesian Group Winner advances to second round. Polynesian Group Winner and Melanesian Group Runnerup play off. Winner advances.
Melanesian Group: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu — Polynesian Group: Cook Islands, Tonga, Western Samoa

Second Round — League system. Winners of each group advance.
Group 1: Australia, Tahiti, Winner of Polynesian-Melanesian Playoff — Group 2: Fiji, New Zealand, Winner of Melanesian Group

Third Round — Winner of Group 1 vs Winner of Group 2. Winner advances to playoff with ASIA playoff loser.

Enter your choice for the ASIA-OCEANIA playoff winner in slot (32).

CONDITIONS

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Portugal

More Poorto than Porto

THE END of FC Porto's reign as kings of Portuguese football may be in sight.

Many people feel that Antonio Oliveria is not the right man to succeed Bobby Robson as coach, despite his experience with the national squad and despite his links with the city.

Oliveira is an Oporto man, with business interests in the area. He is wealthy enough to say to chairman Pinto de Costa: "Let me take over the team and we'll talk about money later."

Some managers touted for the job might not have taken that attitude.

The sales of Vitor Baia to Barcelona and Secretario to Real Madrid obviously will have a weakening effect on Oliveria's squad, for newcomers Artur from Boavista, Austrian Wetl and Uruguayan Diaz do not appear to be in the same class, even though the club did well in a four-way tournament also including Everton, Liverpool and Borussia Monchengladbach, who beat Porto 3-2 in the final.

Even the money the recent transfer-deals brought in will not last long, for there are a lot of bills to be paid.

Oliveira is facing a very big task. So is Robert Waseige, the Belgian from Standard Liege, who has taken over at Sporting Lisbon. New chairman Jose Roquette, a banker, says that the club will be split into four or five companies. What, we wonder, does this entail? Benfica, in contrast, have new optimism after their victory in the Portuguese Cup. Incoming manager Autuori has taken over, his fellow-Brazilian recruits Jamir and Donizete impressed on the pre-season trip to Sweden, and Joao Pinto, Helder and Dimas remain as the framework around which the club can build.

Tough task . . . Antonio Oliveira

● Artur Jorge has been appointed national coach for the second time, after only seven months in charge of the Swiss squad. Jorge, who also has been with Porto, Benfica and Paris St. Germain, previously had the job for three years up to 1995.

ALBERTO DA SILVA

Belgium

Mouscron in the big time

THE SENSE of anticipation with which the 55,000 residents of the small textile town of Mouscron awaited their club's introduction into the big time, following last season's somewhat controversial promotion from the play-offs, grew inexorably when the fixture list was announced.

Although the team coached by George (Mac the Knife) Leekens were granted a low-key start at Lommel, their first home fixture could hardly be more enticing.

Anderlecht, eager to make up for their disappointments of last season, go to Mouscron on August 16 in a game brought forward by a day for television's benefit.

Anderlecht are still the most popular of visitors, notwithstanding the plague of knee injuries suffered by key players. Coach Johan Boskamp, under pressure to regain the title from Club Brugge, will be without defender Glen De Boeck and midfielder Bruno Versavel until near Christmas.

Happily for Boskamp, striker Josip Weber, yet another player afflicted by knee problems, has made a swift recovery.

The injuries forced Boskamp to spend the close season looking for new players. Only one, however, was signed: Suad Katana, the highly-rated and at times arrogant Bosnian libero reluctantly released by Gent.

. . . Paul Okon

Boskamp, who was resigned to missing out in the race for Paul Okon, the Australian defender who left Brugge for Lazio, was relieved to find an equally vaunted player almost on his doorstep.

"The priority was to find a good libero," he explained. "Our scouts were ready to go round Europe, even further maybe, but they found at Gent the man they were looking for."

With Okon's departure, Brugge are all the more keen to retain their other ace foreigner, Mario Stanic, League top scorer last season and subject of a £4m bid from Fiorentina.

The only change of coach in the First Division during the summer involved Antwerp, who have turned again to Dutchman George Kessler after they parted company with Yugoslav Ratko Svilar.

NICHOLAS HARLING

Holland

Ajax still a force

LOUIS VAN GAAL is confident that, despite all the comings and goings, Ajax's move to the new Amsterdam Arena will help inspire the Dutch champions to spring some surprises at home and abroad this season.

It will be a very different Ajax line-up who defend their League title and bid to regain the European trophy conceded to Juventus in Rome in May. Ajax have lost half a team.

Michael Reiziger and Edgar Davids have gone to Milan on Bosman-style free transfers and striker Patrick Kluivert is expected to follow suit next summer – if, that is, Ajax have not resisted the temptation to sell him to one of several interested English clubs while they still can obtain a fee of up to £8million.

Right winger Finidi George, despite speculation of a move to Juventus or Real Madrid, departed for a more low-key future at Betis of Seville. Then Nigeria striker Nwankwo Kanu moved to Internazionale of Italy. Inter had hoped to get Kanu free under the Bosman ruling but, because he is not a European Union citizen, they are having to pay around £4m.

Ajax are filling the gaps with prodigal midfielder Richard Witschge (from Bordeaux), Argentine youngster Mariano Juan (River Plate) and Nigerian winger Tijani Babangida (Roda). All the pre-season signs suggest even an Ajax in transition should dominate again.

Their rivals all lost out in the summer transfer market. PSV Eindhoven sold top-scoring Brazilian Ronaldo to Barcelona, having already lost Peter Hoekstra to Ajax at the start of the year; Feyenoord failed to land any of their originally-promised big signings; and Roda not only sold top attacker Babangida to Ajax but cornerstone defender Johan de Kock to Germany's Schalke.

RINO LANDA

Republic of Ireland

Keane causes a problem

WILL Mick McCarthy forgive Roy Keane and play him in the World Cup qualifying game away to Liechtenstein on August 31?

That will be the question on the mind of most Irish supporters as national team manager McCarthy ponders on his team for his first competitive game. Keane was sent off in McCarthy's first match in charge, against Russia in March. He subsequently was made captain for the US Cup, but failed to turn up at the team's hotel.

After five friendlies against Euro 96 qualifiers and three games in the US Cup, McCarthy should by now have a better idea of his best formation. After two draws, McCarthy got a morale-boosting first win when his young team beat Bolivia 3-0 in the final game of the US Cup.

With several senior players opting out of the end-of-season games, McCarthy is likely to call on some of the 10 newcomers he has introduced so far.

Blackburn's Shay Given is almost certain to take over from Alan Kelly in goal. Others who could make their competitive debut against the team who held the Irish scoreless in their last encounter are defender Gary Breen (Birmingham), Keith O'Neill (Norwich), who scored twice in the win over Bolivia, and David Connolly (Watford). And there should be a recall for Alan McLoughlin, the man Jack Charlton forgot. After scoring that memorable goal against Northern Ireland at Windsor Park, Belfast, in November 1993, the Portsmouth midfielder was ignored. But since McCarthy took over McLoughlin has been a revelation, and he seems certain to start his first competitive game for six years.

Meanwhile, the FAI is still reaping the rewards of the Charlton era. During his decade in charge of the national team the number of people playing soccer in Ireland almost trebled. When he was appointed in 1986 only 65,000 played the game. A recent FAI census revealed that the number of registered players is now over 175,000.

The domestic season gets under way on August 18 with the League Cup. The FAI National League begins on Sunday September 1 – and what a start for newcomers Finn Harps. The Donegal club, who will be making their Premier debut, face north-west rivals Derry City in their first game.

John Hewitt, the former Aberdeen, Celtic and St Mirren winger, is the new manager of Dundalk. County Louth neighbours Drogheda United also have a new boss, Anto Whelan.

SEAN CREEDON

Scotland

Bosman hits hard

AS WIDELY predicted, Scottish football suffered considerable damage as a result of the Bosman ruling. Several clubs lost key players to continental sides over the summer and received no form of financial compensation.

First to suffer were Celtic, who watched as John Collins exchanged the city grime of Glasgow for the delights of the French Riviera, joining Monaco. He was valued at £3m by Celtic, but the club were left frustrated that one of their most prized assets was able to leave without a transfer fee.

In fairness, chairman Fergus McCann was better prepared than most for the Bosman onslaught and managed to generate what should be an adequate replacement for Collins in the shape of Milan midfielder Paolo di Canio.

McCann also secured the signature of Bolton defender Alan Stubbs, but the agreement between the home nations to retain the traditional transfer market meant that Celtic were required to part with £3.5m to shore up their defence.

Celtic fans also were relieved that Portuguese winger Jorge Cadete returned to the club following an extended break in his homeland.

Domestic problems and the apparent desire of the player's agent to renegotiate his contract led to doubts as to whether Cadete, an instant hero with the Parkhead faithful last season, would play for the team again.

His reappearance for pre-season training removed such uncertainties and Celtic supporters are now supremely confident that 1996-97 will be the season when they finally smash the Rangers monopoly.

Other clubs to be affected by Bosman are Motherwell, who lost defender Rab McKinnon to Dutch side FC Twente, Hibs, who saw Under-21 international Steven Tweed depart for Greece, to join Ionikos; and newly-promoted Dundee United, whose out-of-contract striker Craig Brewster also moved to Greece.

Hibs were compensated to a degree when their Northern Ireland international midfielder Michael O'Neill, who also looked destined to head for the Continent, chose to join Coventry City for a fee in the region of £300,000.

Aberdeen and Hearts lost Gary Smith and Allan 'Magic' Johnston respectively to French side Rennes, while Dundee were battling to stop Neil McCann and Gerry Britton also heading for France. Dundee boss Jim Duffy was particularly upset at the prospect of losing McCann, who had been nurtured by the club since his schooldays and for whom they have turned down a number of big-money approaches in the past.

"It's scandalous," raged Duffy, "we give the lad his chance, we develop his talent and look after him, then someone comes in and takes him away for nothing."

One club, of course, have no such problems: Rangers. They have their sights firmly set on equalling Celtic's longstanding record of nine successive League championships, and set about strengthening their squad with the acquisition of Jorg Albertz from Hamburg and Joachim Bjorklund from Vicenza. Ibrox chairman David Murray sees success in Europe as an absolute priority and is determined that Rangers will be equipped to make a lasting impression on the Champions League.

The acquisition of Bjorklund and Albertz, allied to the abilities of existing stars such as Brian Laudrup and Paul Gascoigne, should ensure that the club never have a better opportunity of achieving that objective, even though they have a tough task in the preliminary round, against Russian champions Alania Vladikavkaz.

ALAN FAIRLEY

Monaco man . . . John Collins

Wales

Away-day delight for Barry

BARRY TOWN turned the tables in their UEFA Cup venture, beating Dinaburg of Latvia 2-1 away after being held 0-0 at home.

This was one of the best results by any Welsh club playing in a European competition, although the other UEFA Cup entrant, Newtown, lost on aggregate to Skonto Riga.

Llansantffraid, competing in the Cup-winners Cup, have a tough task against Poland's Ruch Chorzow, and will play the home leg at Wrexham.

Conwy United completed their InterToto Cup campaign with a 4-0 reverse at Silkeborg and were bottom of their group, with the fitness factor against professional opponents proving critical.

On the domestic scene, Inter Cardiff have changed their name to Inter CableTel AFC as part of a £75,000 sponsorship. The deal, hopefully, will be coupled with a sports aid grant which will enable the club to switch to professionalism.

Gary Barnett has taken over as manager of Barry Town, and some shrewd pre-season signings will make them even stronger than last season.

Former Barry managerial pairing Paul and David Giles have teamed up with Ebbw Vale. Paul will concentrate on playing while David moves on to manager John Lewis's coaching staff. Vale are fancied by many to be title challengers this term.

MEL AP IOR THOMAS

Northern Ireland

Thugs ruin a career

TRAGEDY struck for a young footballer in the aftermath of the recent civil disturbances in the province.

Glenavon's Donal Gray, aged 19, was a victim of a severe beating by a group of thugs, claiming to be members of the Provisional IRA, and was left with a broken leg, fractured knee and head injuries. Donal's future in the game is now very much in doubt.

Cliftonville played in the Inter-Toto Cup, though they only picked up one point from their four games – away to Israeli side Hapoel Haifa, while losing to VfB Stuttgart, Aalborg and Standard Liege.

UEFA Cup entrants Portadown and Crusaders also played their preliminary round games in mid-July, but it was Cup-winners Glentoran who gained the plumb draw – they drew Czech side Sparta Prague.

The summer transfer market has been remarkably quiet, with all clubs feeling the pinch. Even Cup-winners Glentoran lost around £120,000 last season. Only newly-promoted Coleraine have made signings of any note: Kenny Shiels has added former Sligo Rovers full-back Robbie Bruton, and English-based central defender Brendan Aspinall and midfielder Andy Ramage to his squad. The Premier Division is due to be increased to 10 clubs in season 1997/98.

National team coach Bryan Hamilton was given a boost for the World Cup qualifiers when N. Ireland put up a good display to draw 1-1 with Germany in Belfast just before Euro 96. Ukraine and Armenia are due to visit Windsor Park in August and October respectively.

ROY KITSON

Greece

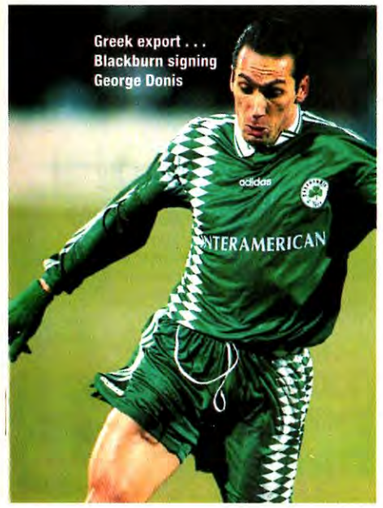
Three for the big time

GREEK soccer is coming of age – the close-season saw the transfer of three First Division players to two top European clubs.

George Donis left champions Panathinaikos to play for England's Blackburn, while Vasilis Tsartas of AEK Athens, last season's league top scorer, and Petros Marinakis of Olympiakos will be playing this season for Spain's Sevilla.

Donis said: "I understand the responsibilities resting on my shoulders [with Blackburn]. I have said it many times that I believe Greek players are worthy of playing in the best leagues in Europe, and that includes England, Spain and Italy. What is lacking is the proper promotion and organisation of Greek soccer.

"There have been many mistakes on all sides and we [Greece] are behind when it comes to promotion. I hope I can play my part in changing this and to show the world that Greek soccer is worthy of attention."



Greek export . . . Blackburn signing George Donis

Only two other Greek players have ever played abroad: Nikos Anastopoulos, who spent a year in Italy 10 years ago, and the great George Sideris, who played for a short time in Italy during the 1960s.

"We are proud that Tsartas is continuing his career abroad," said AEK coach Dusan Bayevic.

"This is a big deal for Greek soccer. I hope other Greek players follow in his footsteps. I believe that what he offered AEK he will also offer to Seville in a short time. He has a lot of potential."

Marinakis added: "It's important that all three of us do our best abroad. It is important that other players from Greece follow us."

Panathinaikos will participate in the UEFA Champions League this season, with AEK in the Cup-winners Cup, and Olympiakos and Traklis Thessaloniki in the UEFA Cup.

Ethnikos Piraeus, Panionios Nea Smymi and Larisa were relegated to the Second Division, while advancing to the top league were Kavala, Veria and Kastoria.

Meanwhile, FIFA lifted its suspension of the Greek Soccer Federation (FPO) following the resolution of a bureaucratic stalemate with the Greek government.

In another matter, the Finance Ministry announced that it will do its best to help the 24 professional soccer teams help pay their debts to the state totalling 7.5 billion drachmas. Olympiakos head the list, owing the state 2.8 billion drachmas.

Against the move is Panathinaikos president George Vardinoyiannis, whose team is one of the few that do not owe money to the state.

Meanwhile, a survey conducted by the Athens daily newspaper *Eleftheros Typos* showed that only the Athens Olympic stadium meets the safety standards set by UEFA for the 1997-98 season and that 700 billion drachmas is needed to fix the other First Division stadiums to meet these standards.

LOU ECONOMOPOULOS

Turkey

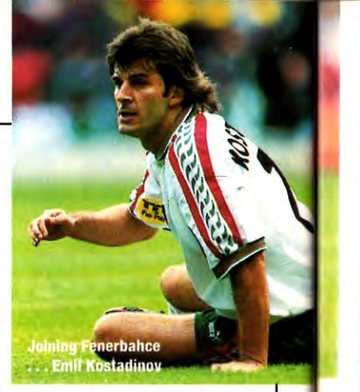
Mustafa's chance

MUSTAFA DENIZLI has been appointed national coach in Turkey, for the second time, and is expected to leave Kocaelispor later this year.

Denizli succeeds Fatih Terim, whose long run of success ended with a disappointing showing in Euro 96 – his last internationals before reverting to club soccer, as successor to Graeme Souness at Galatasaray.

Turkey won one, drew one and lost four of their six games under Denizli in 1987. As coach at Gala, he took the club to the championship, the President's Cup and the semi-finals of the Champions Cup in 1989.

Champions Fenerbahce, under new Brazilian boss Sebastiao Lazaroni, have signed Bulgarian Emil Kostadinov from Bayern Munich and Nigerian Jay-Jay Okocha from Eintracht Frankfurt, at a combined cost of around £3m.


Joining Fenerbahce . . . Emil Kostadinov

Fenerbahce, preparing to begin their European campaign against Maccabi in Tel Aviv, will be without international goalkeeper Rustu, who needs a knee operation, and possibly Bulent and Bolic as well.

Besiktas, now coached by Rasim Kara – who was Terim's assistant – have signed Bulgarian Zlatko Yankov and Croatian goalkeeper Marijan Mrmic.

Trabzonspor, still under Senol Gunes, have recruited Vyaceslav Lichin of Nefchi in Azerbaijan, and Terim has made his first signing for Gala – Swiss forward Adrian Knup from Karlsruhe. At press time, Romanian Gheorghe Hagi was all set to move from Barcelona.

HASAN CEMALI

IN BRIEF

Israel

A shadow of success

THREE YEARS ago, Maccabi Haifa were proclaimed as the best side in the history of the National League, but since then Haifa have been eclipsed by Maccabi Tel Aviv, who won the League and Cup double in June.

Haifa coach Giora Spiegel decided the only way to stop the rot was a wholesale reconstruction of his team. He poached three players from Hapoel Petah Tikva and put a number of veterans on the transfer list.

But the rebuilding plan started to go awry when ace midfielder Haim Revivo, the country's top scorer last season, signed with Spain's Celta Vigo.

The Haifaites looked a pale shadow of their former selves when they lost their opening fixture of the new season, 1-0 at home against Partizan Belgrade in the first leg of the UEFA Cup preliminary round.

The situation appears far rosier for Betar Jerusalem. They cruised to a 3-1 win in their UEFA Cup tie against Malta's Floriana.

Maccabi Tel Aviv parted company with coach Dror Kashtan despite winning their first double since 1977. Former coach Avraham Grant has been recalled.

DEREK FATTAL

Albania

Selami goes for glory

FLAMURTARI have been making news during the close season in Albania. Their ambitious president, 30-year-old Shkelquim Selami, aims to bring back the glory of the 1980s, when they competed in European cups.

Selami, a former Flamurtari player, is a powerful businessman. After signing two of the best known Albanian players, strikers Leonard Perloshi and Alban Bushi, he acquired goalkeeper Gjeloshi, once of Beslidhja, Teuta's Ilirralli, and the playmaker from champions Tirana, Prenga.

Sokol Kushta, now 32, also has rejoined the club, after playing for Greek and Cypriot outfits, and Erior Mehilli, 26, has returned after a spell in Slovenia.

Selami's aim is to make the team as professional as possible, a task which is enormously difficult in Albanian football. He has spent £100,000, quite a substantial sum by local standards. The manager is Bejkush Birce, former coach of the national team. At the same time, Selami has also undertaken to rebuild Flamurtari's main stand.

GEZIM NUSHI

Malta

Kosanovic's sad kick-off

NEW national team coach Milorad Kosanovic experienced a dreadful debut in Belgrade against Yugoslavia.

In their first World Cup qualifying outing, Malta were outclassed and beaten 6-0. Kosanovic, a Yugoslav, said: "I knew all along that we were going to face an uphill task."

On the local scene, champions Sliema Wanderers won the Super Cup, beating Cup-winners Valletta after a penalty shoot-out. Sliema midfielder Noel Turner, just 21, also won the Footballer of the Year award.

Nearly all Premier League sides have been involved in transfer negotiations. Sliema are in line to sign Yugoslav defender George Pintac.

Valletta captured Drasko Braunovic from Rabat Ajax, and Birkirkara Luxol, with Alan Sunderland (ex-Arsenal) as their new technical director, are still in negotiations with Hungarian Ferenc Mezsaros, formerly with Lokeren.

Hibernians' involvement in the InterToto Cup ended after a series of defeats by CSKA Sofia, Strasbourg, Uralmash Ekateringburg and Kocaelispor.

DOMENICO AQUILINA

IN BRIEF

Sweden

Bengt getting better

GOALKEEPER Bengt Andersson was for years one of the faceless men of Swedish soccer, probably fifth or sixth in the ranking list.

Then a move from Brage to Orgryte proved profitable and in 1994, when Orgryte were promoted back to the Allsvenskan, the club staff insisted that Andersson was among the finest goalkeepers in the League. So, when the national team's regular number one and World Cup hero Thomas Ravelli was injured, Andersson got his chance.

Andersson, reliable rather than spectacular, has now attracted a bid from the Spanish club Tenerife. At 28, he was seen as a mere stop-gap, but he looks as if he could make the national team place his for good – especially if Ravelli cannot shake off his injury jinx.

The action stopped for a month's break with IFK Gothenburg in command at the top. They boosted their morale by trouncing closest rivals Helsingborg 4-1. Recent signings Andreas Andersson and Niclas Alexandersson have proved their worth in the blue-and-white shirts.

IFK agreed to sell their international midfielder Hakan Mild to Spain's Real Sociedad for £1.5m. Mild will move after IFK's qualifying matches for the Champions League.

Norrkoping have done better than last year, although their hard-to-please fans have been somewhat critical of the straightforward tactics employed by the English coach Colin Toal.

PENTTI HIETANEN

Finland

Vakkila fired

CHAMPIONS FC Haka caused the biggest upset of the season by terminating the contract of coach Jukka Vakkila, who guided them to the league title last season.

Haka's league form has been disappointing and they could only draw 2-2 at home with Estonia's Flora Tallinn in the UEFA Cup preliminary round. Vakkila's place will be taken by Esko Malm, a former coach.

HJK Helsinki responded to their disappointing season by sacking coach Tommy Lindholm. The men hired to get the club out of trouble are Jari-Pekka Keuruianen and former national coach Martti Kuusela, who both have previous experience of coaching at HJK. Kuusela is working on a non-contract basis as he is waiting for another job abroad.

League leaders Inter have lost some of their early pace, being caught by their city rivals, TPS Turku. Their young players are urged on by Juha Malinen, the country's loudest coach, who believes in hard pressing tactics and collective teamwork.

PENTTI HIETANEN

Norway

Ole for United

EVER since Ole Gunnar Solskjar stepped on to the Norwegian soccer scene at the highest level he has been one of the greatest attacking talents in the country.

Having scored loads of goals for Second Division side Clausenengen of Kristiansund, he was picked up by Molde last season and was an instant hit.

He was selected for the Norwegian squad quickly and his pace and sharpness proved devastating at international level as well. In the World Cup qualifier against Azerbaijan in June, he scored with a superb volley from outside the penalty area, having first chested down the ball.

Old Trafford new boy . . . Ole Gunnar Solskjar

Foreign managers were impressed and Manchester United promptly signed 23-year-old Solskjar for £1.5m. A week earlier manager Alex Ferguson had gone to Turkey to sign Solskjar's compatriot, Ronny Johnsen, 27, a central defender with pace and presence.

Established international Johnsen has taken over from Rune Bratseth as the central figure of the national team, and had just completed a successful year with Besiktas in Turkey.

Competition for places at Old Trafford will be tough, but Solskjar says: "Former manager Aage Hareide has given me sound advice. I'm certain to develop as a player."

Hareide, once a player with Manchester City, is sure Solskjar will make it: "He is an adaptable lad and I'm not really surprised that a large club came for him, but I must admit that it happened faster than I expected."

With the Norwegian domestic season well into its second half, the most surprising factor is that a number of players have chosen to sign for Austrian clubs.

Start have lost Erik Mykland and Pal Lydersen to FC Linz and Sturm Graz. Vidar Riseth leaves Kongsvinger for Linzer, and international goalkeeper Frode Grodaas of Lillestrom is on his way to Sturm Graz.

Rosenborg are well ahead in the table and Harald Brattbakk is again proving his value as leading scorer, with good support from Steffen Iversen and Mini Jacobsen. In the Cup, however, all the top sides went out before the quarter-finals.

SIGURD ODEGAARD

Denmark

Larsen leaves Lyngby

ANGER over the transfer of Henrik Larsen from Lyngby to FC Copenhagen overshadowed the start of the new season as Brondby began the defence of their title.

Leaving Lyngby . . . Henrik Larsen

Larsen, a hero of Denmark's European Championship triumph in 1992 and a key member of the Denmark side in Euro 96, was as stunned as anyone that Lyngby had agreed to sell him.

He had been with the club as a youth, and always returned there from foreign adventures at Pisa, Aston Villa and Waldhof Mannheim.

Lyngby are in the UEFA Cup this season, while the ambitious FC Copenhagen are not after finishing a disappointing seventh in the table last season.

Their fans were outraged. 'Judas club' was one of the printable graffiti slogans daubed on the walls of the Lyngby stadium.

Money, of course, explains all. FC Copenhagen are, relatively speaking, a wealthy club and the desire for success in the Superliga becomes more intense when you begin to get 30,000 crowds.

Yes, that's right. Twice last season the club had gate figures above that mark – unknown in Denmark for decades.

The penultimate round of matches last season brought a fabulous climax. AGF Aarhus only drew 1-1 at home to OB Odense in front of a record 19,500 crowd to relinquish top spot.

Brondby, meanwhile, thrashed great rivals FC Copenhagen 4-0 at the Parken in front of 30,891 spectators, with three players sent off into the bargain.

That left Brondby to clinch their first title in five years with a 2-0 home win over Aab Aalborg. AGF were just a point behind in second place, with OB third.

Ikast and Naestved were relegated, and have been replaced for the new season by two former champions who have both revived after many seasons in the wilderness – Hvidovre and AB.

Both are based in Copenhagen, which means a total of five clubs from the capital in the 12-team Superliga.

Former national team manager Sepp Piontek was released by Aab after their poor season as defending champions and replaced by Per Westergaard.

There were few other transfers of note during the summer, although Jacob Laursen left Silkeborg for Derby and Christian Lonstrup went to Cagliari from FC Copenhagen.

But Denmark's dour, defensive performances in Euro 96 hardly made it the country to scour for new talent.

JIM HOLDEN

Iceland

Must do better!

DISMAL, dire, depressing, and bitterly disappointing are all suitable terms to describe Iceland's performance against Macedonia in the first qualifier for the 1998 World Cup.

The team stuttered, stumbled and scraped their way to a 1-1 draw in Reykjavik.

And only four days later, public confidence in the national side took a further dip when, minus their Scandinavian 'exiles', they scraped to a 2-0 home win in a friendly against Cyprus.

The domestic title race is shaping up to be the closest in years. IA Akranes and KR Reykjavik are locked together at the top. The reigning champions have a two-point lead, but KR have a game in hand.

National youth captain Valur Fannar Gislason has been snapped up by Arsenal in a three-year deal.

RAB CHRISTIE

Yugoslavia

Santrac on track

Michael Butcher on the challenge facing national team manager Slobodan Santrac

MOST head coaches have difficulty getting their squad together. In Slobodan Santrac's case, the headache is compounded by the fact that most of the team play across Europe, and one even has to come from as far afield as Japan.

In Belgrade's Hyatt hotel on the eve of Yugoslavia's official re-entry into the World Cup campaign, the lobby was a spotter's paradise for the cream of the continent's football teams.

Milinko Pantic, key player in Atletico Madrid's revival, greeted Santrac while Vladimir Jugovic lounged on a sofa with Savo Milosevic. It was Jugovic who scored the final goal in Juventus's penalty shoot-out with Ajax in the Champions Cup Final. Milosevic opened Aston Villa's winning account in the English League Cup final with a spectacular left-foot shot from outside the area.

Meanwhile, sometime captain Dragan Stojkovic, of Nagoya Grampus Eight, was being mobbed by his Japanese supporters' club, who had made the long journey to watch him play.

Santrac had the look of a man who had finally overcome the biggest hurdle: to get the team together.

Leading light . . . Dragan Stojkovic

A squat, stocky individual, he has not changed much since he was the scourge of defences at home and abroad. He still holds the Yugoslav record of 236 goals.

Despite the fact that his squad play in so many leagues, Santrac was not anticipating too many problems combining so many contrasting styles: "The squad will play in the same way as they play in their teams. The only problem that exists is when two stars play in the same position: Bermovic and Jokanovic, Stojkovic and Pantic. A third problem, which is relative because it's not always like that, is Curcic and Jugovic."

The exodus of talent to foreign leagues was accelerated by the trade and sporting embargo imposed on the country during the war in Bosnia.

While they were about to pack their bags for the 1992 European championships, Yugoslavia were excluded and the eventual winners, Denmark, replaced them. "It was unjust because they made us give up a place we had worked for," said Santrac, bemoaning the subsequent loss of four years of international football.

"It was also unfair on the players. A career in football is always very short and some of that time has been taken from them."

The lack of international competition during the ban became the main obstacle to progress and some novel methods were introduced to fill the gap in the calendar.

The most effective of these was for the Federation to choose the "away" team from the dozens of Yugoslavs in foreign leagues while journalists choose a national select. For the following match the selectors' roles were reversed.

"In this way having the players playing abroad was a benefit," said Santrac. "The foreign selections were a good gauge of where our game stood in comparison with the world outside." In addition, inter-divisional matches were arranged as well as age group matches for the Under-21s and Under-23s.

Yugoslavia's position as international pariahs gave them a unique chance to reinvent the national game and Santrac claims they have emerged new-born from this period: "At the time the sanctions were imposed, we made a plan to construct a new team and the products of that programme of ours are Milosevic, Curcic, Nadj, Ciric, Cerovic, Saula, Mirkovic, Pantic, Kocic and Milojevic."

Last year, Yugoslavia were content to feel their way forward playing friendlies. The first of the six arranged was against world champions Brazil. The extent of Santrac's reliance on foreign exports was clear. In the 2-0 defeat, only the goalkeeper, Goran Pandurovic, was based at home.

In subsequent games, though, it was easy to see why it is such a problem for Santrac to choose his squad. Switching exclusively to home-based players, the team defeated Uruguay at home in Belgrade in the first international on home soil since sanctions were imposed.

On the other hand, there has been plenty of speculation concerning what has been lost with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Santrac smiled at the thought: "That's a problem I don't even want to consider. It would cause merry hell if, on top of this team which is full of stars, we had Suker, Boban, Prosinecki and Boksic. There are only 11 places and we have far too many top players as it is."

Partizan rejoin the party

THERE IS an atmosphere of restrained joy in the corridors of Partizan Belgrade this year.

Joy at their return to European football after winning the League. Restrained because they have been allowed into the UEFA Cup, rather than the Champions Cup.

The decision to shunt them into the UEFA Cup was not entirely unexpected. President Bozidar Martinovic was philosophical about the outcome of UEFA's deliberations: "We have no friends in UEFA. It's an injustice because the points we accumulated in the past are not recognised."

Ever since Yugoslavia was excluded from world sport, points accumulated for past performances in European competition have been annulled. This is year zero for Partizan Belgrade.

Last season, despite finishing as runners-up in the League, Partizan were mysteriously left out of European competition.

Nonetheless, Martinovic was in expansive mood as he strolled proudly through the trophy room. Just 300 metres away there was an even more impressive trophy room at Red Star.

"There is a well-known rivalry between us and Red Star and it can be compared to that between Milan and Inter or Real Madrid and Barcelona. It is that rivalry which helped our football survive during the sanctions."

Last season Partizan lifted the title while Red Star retrieved some lost honour by trouncing their neighbours 3-1 in the Cup Final.

Three championships and two cups make the last four years the most successful period in Partizan's history. The architect of these successes, coach Ljubisa Tumbakovic, has had his contract renewed for another two years.

Despite the ultimate need to emulate Red Star by placing the Champions Cup in the trophy cabinet, there is a strong mood at Partizan that ultimately they will be better served by finding their feet in the UEFA Cup.

Not only were Partizan excluded from the continental competitions, but in the last four seasons there has been a massive haemorrhage of talent.

"Our football clubs are going through a bad time," said club secretary Manojlovic. "First of all, because the best of our players went abroad. Secondly, financially, we couldn't get any support from sponsors from western Europe. So we have effectively been relegated to the second division in Europe."

Partizan's legacy of players to European leagues is notable to say the least. They include Predrag Mijatovic (Real Madrid), Milinko Pantic (Atletico Madrid), Savo Milosevic (Aston Villa) and Sasa Curcic (Bolton).

Revenue from the sale of players over the past four years has totalled some £20m and this has been vital for the life blood of what is more than just a football club – Partizan play 25 sports, ranging from athletics to water polo, and even chess.

With the lifting of sanctions, the sought-after western finance is beginning to come in. There are plans to build a hotel in the birch woods that surround the stadium. And international sportswear company Nike have signed a two-year contract with the club. "Maybe with increased finance we will be able to hold players here and stop them going abroad," comments Manojlovic.

That may prove a vain hope. Milosevic thinks there may be no going back now that Yugoslavia's youngsters have seen the fabulous wealth being offered to the ex-patriate players: "It will continue to be a problem. People don't have any money to go to football. The only decision players can make is to go somewhere else."

The immediate future for Partizan is rosy with their return to European football. But whether they continue to be a nursery for the rest of the world to cherry-pick their talent from is harder to predict. Time will tell.

MICHAEL BUTCHER

IN BRIEF

GEORGIA

DYNAMO TBILISI won their seventh title, scoring 109 goals in 30 League games and losing only one.

They also took the Georgian Cup, beating Dynamo of Batumi in front of 40,000 spectators. Gela Inalishvili scored the only goal.

Three clubs, Margveti, Kolkheti 1913 and Samtredia, all had 68 points, but Samtredia were placed fourth in the table because they had two wins fewer. Durudzhi of Kvarelie were the poor boys of the season, winning only four points and conceding 127 goals.

Dynamo Tbilisi and Margveti will take part in this season's UEFA Cup and Dynamo of Batumi in the Cup winners Cup.

VLADIMIR KALINKOVICH

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

FOOTBALL problems and misunderstandings in Bosnia and Herzegovina are continuing.

After the signing of the Dayton agreement regulating the relations between three nations in the country, a sports relationship was expected to be solved, too. Unfortunately, there is no agreement yet on football activities.

Representatives of the Football Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina were defeated by UEFA and kept only their status as a joined member, but they won at a FIFA assembly and became a full member.

The basic reason for the conflict between the Croatians, Herzeg-Bosnia and the Muslims is the ratio of the clubs in the First Division.

Herzeg-Bosnia demanded six places in the League (too many regarding the quality of the teams) but could not get it, and as a result went on separately, so there will be two separate Leagues and UEFA will not allow the clubs to play in European contests. Stubbornness will cause lots of damage to football in this country.

ZDRAVKO REIC

SLOVAKIA

SLOVAK fans could only watch TV and marvel at the success of their Czech brothers in England, and wonder when their national team might achieve such heights.

Another question also has been posed: what might have happened if they had stayed together and such as Moravcik and Dubocsky had been available to the Slovak-born coach of the Czechs, Dusan Uhrin? It is pure speculation!

What is rather more down to earth in Slovak football is that, apart from at FC Kosice, money is in even shorter supply, even at Slovan. FCK are backed by the Eastern Slovak Iron and Steel Complex, which also has bought Sparta Prague, and must rank equal favourites with Slovan for the title.

They begin the season proper with a visit from Glasgow Celtic in the UEFA Cup, while Slovan have an almost equally difficult task, after beating St Patrick's Athletic, in facing Trabzonspor.

Neither Slovak representative looks likely to survive but perhaps shock Cup-winners Cemlon Humenne have a chance against Albania's Flamurtari. Spartak Trnava must be kicking themselves for losing a Cup Final which seemed there for the taking.

Perhaps the country's football can be looked at afresh and a blueprint produced if Jozef Venglos is elected president of the SFZ (Slovak FA) but maybe the iron works owners of Sparta Prague will make an offer he cannot resist.

BOB VAUGHAN

Croatia

Confusion reigns as sales soar

NOBODY knows if the championship in Croatia is going to start on time, nor how many clubs will be in the Premier League.

Ten clubs were due to play each other four times during the season, and the Second Division was supposed to have 16 teams, but these ideas brought many protests.

Traditionally strong football centres such as Pula, Vinkovci and Slavonski Brod found themselves without a Premier League club.

There is a rule which says that a system of competition cannot be changed before the next year, but since Croatia got independence in 1992 there has not been a single year without a change – from 12 clubs to 16, then 15, then 16 again.

Eventually all the clubs agreed unanimously on 10, but at the end of the season they realised it would be a sort of an 'amputation' for Croatian football.

Officials are likely to vote against their previous decision and support the plan for 16 Premier sides, two Second Divisions with six clubs each, and five regional divisions.

In the meantime, the fuss about Croatian selector Miroslav Blazevic is raging on. After the Euro 96 defeat against Germany he told journalists he had resigned, but he has not done so officially, although he says: "I wouldn't stay even if my legs were cut off."

The players are leaving Croatian clubs, trying to earn their living. Hajduk Split have lost five players, Milan Rapaic (Perugia), Nenad Pralija (Espanyol), Aljosa Asanovic (Derby County), Mirsad Hibic (Sevilla) and Mario Mestrovic (Alaves, Spain).

Zvonimir Soldo went from FC Croatia Zagreb to Stuttgart, Zoran Mamic left the same club and went to Bochum. FC Varteks lost Andrija Balajic to Koln, Grgica Kovac to Hapoel, Marijan Mrmic to Besiktas. Dario Smoje (FC Rijeka) signed for Fiorentina, Igor Pamic went from FC Osijek to Sochaux, and Josko Popovic moved from FC Zagreb to LASK (Linz). And so it goes on . . .

ZDRAVKO REIC

Russia

Fired . . . Oleg Romantsev

Ignatiev is top man

OLEG ROMANTSEV became Russia's third national manager to quit over the past six years. He has been replaced by Boris Ignatiev, his assistant in the disastrous Euro 96 campaign.

Romantsev followed Anatoli Byshovets, who was fired after Euro 92, and Pavel Sadyrin, who lost his job after Russia's 1994 World Cup failure.

The Russian team, comprised mostly of foreign-based players, failed to qualify from Group C in England and were strongly criticised at home. Responding to fierce attacks of the public and media, Romantsev and Vyacheslav Koloskov, president of the National Football Union, put all the blame on the "legionnaires" who allegedly "could not care less about the nation's pride and prestige".

According to the team officials, a group of players started bargaining about payment instead of concentrating on game preparations.

The players in their turn, said money did not affect their performance, and insisted that they were eliminated solely due to bad coaching.

Romantsev could have stayed as Russia's manager if he gave up his post as Moscow Spartak president, but he chose to stay with the club.

In the meantime the NFU executive council 'blacklisted' three players, Kharine, Shalimov and Kiryakov. Newly-elected Ignatiev, 55, was notified that if he wanted to use them in the future he would have to get the council's approval.

Ignatiev, who is now putting together a new team for the World Cup campaign has called up Oleg Salenko, who scored five in a World Cup game against Cameroon and is now playing in Turkey. He had been persistently left out of the squad by Romantsev.

Vladikavkaz Alaniya maintained their lead in the League following the Euro 96 break, chased by rapidly progressing Rotor Volgograd and three Moscow clubs – Dinamo, Spartak and CSKA.

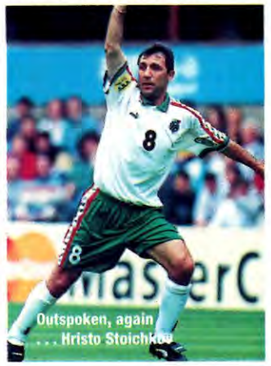
VICTOR GUSEV

EASTERN EUROPE

Bulgaria

Poser over Penev's role

FAILURE to qualify for the Euro 96 quarter-finals was a considerable blow after the convincing style in which qualification had been achieved. Some of the international squad may have seen their last chance of winning a major competition go during the France match at Newcastle.


Outspoken, again . . . Hristo Stoichkov

That looks to be the case at least for manager Dimitar Penev, sacked by the Bulgarian Football Union shortly after the finals. But is it?

Hristo Stoichkov declared while in Sofia during the brief holidays that he would not play again for his country unless the former management were restored. This was seen as an attempt to persuade the responsible BFU committee to extend Penev's contract, which happened to run out at the end of July.

Only Balakov of those selected regularly in the starting line-up is reported not to have supported the captain's campaign, but who will run the team and who will play if there is a stalemate?

Bulgaria have a World Cup qualifying match with Israel in Tel Aviv on September 1, and five weeks later the team are due in Luxembourg. Time is of the essence if points are not unnecessarily to be dropped, and with a far-flung squad and UEFA commitments for Slavia and Cup-winners Cup involvement for Cup runners-up Levski, the new national coach (or Penev, if his team get him reinstated) has plenty to do.

Of the European Championship team, Lechkov was probably the most likely to be on the move following an unhappy spell in Hamburg. His new port of call, Marseille, should suit him better and the pace of French football will be more to his liking.

In domestic football the question is whether Slavia can maintain their newly-acquired position as top dog in Sofia while competing in Europe. They start with a tricky tie away to Tirol, while Lok face Rapid. Both will do well to survive.

BOB VAUGHAN

Romania

A tricky start for Steaua

WITH General Iordanescu still in office, preparations are beginning for another Romanian World Cup campaign, which it is to be hoped will rival the previous one at home and in the United States.

Something needs to be done to e rase the memory of the unfortunate visit to England. Romania rarely travel well in British climes and June 1996 was no exception, debatable decisions or not.

Double winners Steaua lead the domestic scene, as ever, and are the only side betting fans can realistically tip for the 1997 title. An 11-point gap ahead of FC Nacional emphasised the gulf between Steaua and the rest, now including disappointing Dinamo, who were fifth and had to be content with InterToto football.

Steaua, nevertheless, have some early mountains to climb. Despite a considerable European pedigree they not only find themselves in the qualifying round for the Champions Cup but they face Club Brugge who, like Anderlecht last year, are suffering what could be termed "co-efficient bad luck".

The winners of the tie, with Steaua having home advantage in leg two, should be a match for most if not all those already qualified, and when that is decided the Steaua players in Iordanescu's squad go on to a World Cup match at home to Lithuania on August 31.

There is no peace for the wicked let alone for recently unsuccessful international football teams.

Perhaps expectation in Romania can return to normal and new blood be infused into what, in England, proved an ailing, aged squad.

BOB VAUGHAN

Hungary

Faint signs of hope

THERE was no medal for the Olympians but the experience of the qualifying and final stages should stand the Under-23 players in good stead when it comes to selecting the squad for the World Cup.

Group Three of the qualifying competition got under way in the spring, but Hungary and Finland are in action for the first time when they meet on September 1 in the Nepstadion.

The Magyar record over the past decade is nothing short of shocking. When it comes to 4-1 defeats in friendlies, the scoreline against Croatia, it is not surprising that Ferenc Puskas will talk about anything but Hungarian international football.

The FA decided First League clubs would not participate in the InterToto Cup, and the first chance to improve on European performances will be when Ferencvaros, hoping to build on last season's Champions League success, face IFK in the qualifying round in Gothenburg. A day later Kispest Honved will hope to tie up a place in the next round of the Cup-winners Cup when they visit Skopje to face Macedonia's Sloga Jugomagnat.

Both draws give Hungarian teams a chance to progress as does BVSC's tie with Barry Town.

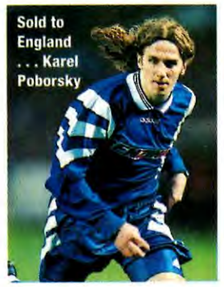
Hungarian football needs something along the lines of recent Czech successes, and Fradi look best equipped. With MTK re-established in the top grade, there are signs of the dawning of a new era.

BOB VAUGHAN

Czech Rep

Slavia try to regain lost time

THE EUPHORIA of the European Championship silver medal was dampened by news of legendary Slavia goalkeeper Frantisek Planicka's death at his home in Prague.


Sold to England . . . Karel Poborsky

He was a month into his 92nd year and had been in frail health for some time, but that had not prevented him from giving forceful opinions at the club's annual general meeting until recent times.

Only since the reforms initiated since 1989 has his beloved Slavia been able to attempt to regain 40 years lost ground and enter the Champions Cup. Their task in 1996-97 is not being made easier by the departures of Poborsky and Bejbl.

Qualification for the Champions League begins with an uncomfortable visit to Zurich. At least the return is in Prague, but bitter rivals Sparta will fancy their chances of going further than the champions when they play Glentoran in Belfast.

In the UEFA Cup, Sigma Olomouc tackle Hutnik Cracow in an attempt to qualify for the first round proper but may find the going tough in Southern Poland.

All this and World Cup qualifying on the horizon makes it a busy time for the 'Heroes of England' who are hardly settled back at their clubs, old and new. National coach Dusan Uhrin has the extra problem of his own success – high expectation.

BOB VAUGHAN

Poland

Count us out!

THERE was to be no successful return to the national team for coach Antoni Piechniczek. Poland lost 2-0 to Russia in a friendly in Moscow in June. It was a poor performance and Piechniczek now faces a problem unknown to other coaches.

Andrzej Juskowiak, the team's top scorer who spent last season with Olympiakos in Greece, was very disappointed at being substituted at half-time. He declared: "I do not want to play in the national team. I missed my holidays to come to Poland for a training camp. For what? To play only 45 minutes?"

Juskowiak suggested that Piotr Nowak, based in Germany with 1860 Munich, could make the same decision. It was impossible to ask Nowak directly. He preferred to travel to Hong Kong after the finish of the Bundesliga season instead of playing in Moscow.

Tomasz Iwan, of Feyenoord, said that he "did not imagine himself in the match against England in October".

Widzew Lodz won the 1996 Polish League title, their third in all and their first since 1982. It was a personal triumph for manager Franciszek Smuda, who persevered with his "total fighting football". Widzew pipped Legia, last season's champions, to the title thanks to a 2-1 win in Warsaw. The match was marred by violence, which resulted in a three-month ground ban.

Over the summer Widzew lost Andrzej Wozniak to FC Porto, where Jozef Mlynarczyk is now goalkeeping coach, and Waldemar Jaskulski to Standard Liege. Reinforcements were brought in for the preliminary round of the Champions Cup, against Brondby. Maciej Szczesny (Legia Warsaw), Radoslaw Michalski (Legia Warsaw), Pawel Wojtala (Lech Poznan), Jacek Dembinski (Lech Poznan) and Slawomir Majak (Hannover 96) are the new boys.

Ruch Chorzow, who beat GKS Belchatow 1-0 in the Cup final, face Llansantffraid in the preliminary round of the Cup-winners Cup. Legia Warsaw and Hutnik Krakow go into the UEFA Cup.

Marek Koniarek of Widzew was the top scorer of last season with 29 goals. Pogon Szczecin, Lechia/Olimpia Gdansk, Stal Mielec and Siarka Tarnobrzeg were relegated.

DARIUSZ KUROWSKI

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South America

Ten again

Argentina's River Plate maintained a remarkable sequence in this year's Libertadores Cup. Eric Weil reports from Buenos Aires

Fine class . . . Hernan Crespo scores the winner in the Libertadores Cup Final

RIVER PLATE – Argentina's most successful team – continued their 10-year success cycle when they won the Libertadores Cup for the second time.

In 1966, when they first took part, they reached the final, losing to Uruguay's Penarol. They had to wait another 10 years before reaching the final again, this time losing to Brazil's Cruzeiro, but 10 years later, in 1986, came their first victory, when they beat Colombia's America in the final.

This year – after another gap of 10 years and taking part in the Libertadores Cup for the 17th time – they won the trophy by again beating America of Colombia in the final. And they are hoping it will not be a further 10 years before their next success.

However club sources say financially the Cup victory has not been a success for them. The players (and coaching staff) were due to share 50 per cent of the gate receipts and 75 per cent of TV rights and it is calculated that each player would collect a $200,000 bonus. Gate receipts for the second leg of the final in Buenos Aires set an Argentinian record of $2,705,000.

America controlled most of the action in the first leg at home, but had difficulty beating River Plate goalkeeper German Burgos, who saved a penalty. Anthony De Avila, the 34-year-old Colombian international, scored the only goal in the first half – his 11th in this year's tournament, which left him as top scorer. River Plate did well to keep down the score, because they played for the last 35 minutes without midfielder Leonardo Astrada.

Hernan Crespo wiped out America's lead within six minutes of the start of the second leg, but after that the result was always in doubt, especially when America took control in the second half. But Crespo scored a second goal after 61 minutes for the 2-0 win (2-1 aggregate) in which Ariel Ortega was outstanding.

For a long time it had looked as if this would be yet another final settled by a penalty shoot-out. Crespo's two goals took him to 10 to become the tournament's second highest scorer.

River Plate had little difficulty getting through their first-round group, from which three or four teams qualified, nor through the second round on a 6-4 aggregate against Sporting Cristal (Peru).

It was different in the quarter-finals, however, against compatriots San Lorenzo, with whom they had already drawn both matches in the first round. A late Ortega goal gave them a 2-1 win in the first leg and when leading the second 1-0 they seemed to be safe. But San Lorenzo's 34-year-old former World Cup defender Oscar Ruggeri had a magnificent second half, virtually beating River Plate by himself.

He seemed to be all over the place, heading the equaliser and hitting the crossbar twice.

In the semi-finals, against Universidad, the Chileans often played the better soccer. River Plate hardly deserved the first leg 2-2 draw in Santiago and the Chileans were denied what looked like a legitimate penalty before River Plate won the second leg 1-0.

The real battles came off the field, between fans. In Santiago one was knifed and left in a serious condition while a large number from both sides were injured and also detained by police. In Buenos Aires, although over 1,000 police and security personnel were on duty in and around the stadium, they failed to stop the fighting. There were over 200 arrests and complaints from Chilean fans that they had been attacked by police for no apparent reason.

In the other semi-final, Gremio (Brazil) – favoured to retain the trophy – managed only a 1-0 home win over weakened America, who had three key players suspended. This was not enough against a back-to-strength America at home in Cali, although the last two goals for the 3-1 win (3-2 aggregate) came in the last six minutes.

Although there were slightly fewer goals after the second round as most games became closer, the 90 cup matches still brought 261 goals, at an average of 2.9 in each.

● The South American Soccer Confederation are studying a possible format change for next season in which the four semi-finalists would meet in a round-robin tournament in a neutral country. The bottom line is whether TV rights would compensate clubs for loss of home gate receipts.

LEADING LIBERTADORES WINNERS

Countries: 17 – Argentina; 8 – Uruguay, Brazil; 2 – Paraguay; 1 – Colombia, Chile.

Clubs: 7 – Independiente (Arg); 5 – Penarol (Uru); 3 – Estudiantes de La Plata (Arg), Nacional (Uru).

Brazil

Flamengo double up

BOTH Brazil's major state championships finished without play-offs. Flamengo won the second stage of the Rio (Carioca) Championship to add to their first stage win – as Palmeiras had done before them in Sao Paulo.

And in both cases performances over the season left little doubt that they were the best teams.

Flamengo went through both stages undefeated and won 17 of their 22 games, but they were a bit lucky on the last day against old rivals Vasco da Gama, who could have caught them up and forced a play-off if they had won. Vasco hit the crossbar twice and had a penalty appeal turned down in the 0-0 draw.

For Flamengo coach Joel Santana it was a second successive Rio title. Last year he won it with Fluminense, who beat Flamengo 3-2 in the title game. This time, in the second round, the Fla-Flu classic ended in a 1-0 win for Flamengo.

With the Rio tournament over, Flamengo can now field Bebeto, acquired from Spain's La Coruna, but this will not mean the hoped-for renewal of the Bebeto-Romario striking partnership which helped Brazil to the last World Cup. Romario is due to return to Spain, joining Valencia.

Palmeiras, who carried all before them in Sao Paulo, also suffered the loss of two internationals – midfielders Rivaldo and Amaral, who are moving to Italy's Parma for £5.2m and £2.6m respectively – but the transaction was only likely to leave the Brazilian club with £520,000, because the players' contracts belong to Parmalat, sponsor of both clubs.

Palmeiras also missed out on the Brazil Cup, for which they were firm favourites, after holding Cruzeiro to a 1-1 draw in Belo Horizonte in the first leg of the final. But the sell-out crowd at Sao Paulo's Pacaembu stadium was stunned by Cruzeiro's winner nine minutes from the end for a 2-1 victory.

Cruzeiro, who had knocked out other big clubs Flamengo, Vasco da Gama and Corinthians on the way to the final, qualify for next year's Libertadores Cup together with the winner of the Brazilian national championship to be played in the second half of the year.

● TONINHO CEREZO, the former Brazilian World Cup player (1978 and 1982), now 41, has returned to play for Atletico Mineiro, the club where he started.

Following a season with Sao Paulo, he was prepared to play for nothing, but as the Brazilian federation does not accept the registration of contracts without remuneration he is collecting a minimum monthly salary of $112 until the end of the year, when he hopes to take up coaching.

ERIC WEIL

World Cup Qualifiers

Colombia lead, for now

COLOMBIA went to the top of the South American qualifying league for the 1998 World Cup (from which four of the nine teams go to France) with a 3-1 home victory over Uruguay in Barranquilla.

Defeat left Uruguay with a 1-0-2 record and although there is still a long way to go (each country will play 16 games), they may soon be in real danger of not qualifying.

Uruguayan coach Hector Nunez did not call up all his best players from abroad, but although Colombia led 2-0 after 23 minutes it was not all that easy.

Another giant, Argentina, almost came a cropper; they had keeper Burgos and midfielder Almeyda to thank for coming away from Lima with a 0-0 draw.

Peru completely outplayed Argentina and Roberto Palacios, Flavio Maestri and Brazilian-born Julinho were a handful for the defence. Abel Balbo was sent off for a foul after 30 minutes, but Peru had been on top before that. Argentina were without their leading scorer, Gabriel Batistuta.

Bolivia celebrated FIFA's decision to allow them to play World Cup qualifying matches in La Paz, 3,600 metres above sea level, with a 6-1 victory over Venezuela there.

Venezuela went 2-0 down just before half-time, and could not last out although they sent on three fresh players for the second half.

Ecuador, who also play home games at almost 3,000 metres above sea level, in Quito, won their first two games at home, but lost badly, 4-1, in their first away game, to Chile, who are not judged to be among the stronger teams. Ivan Zamorano scored twice.

Due to the Olympic Games, the next round of qualifying games is not scheduled until September 1 – Argentina v Paraguay, Colombia v Chile, Ecuador v Venezuela and Bolivia v Peru.

In the meantime Argentina have expressed an intention of bidding for the 2006 World Cup.

ERIC WEIL

Argentina

Four teams eye title

With three matches to go, and as the national closing championship went into a month's recess due to the Olympic Games, there were four strong title candidates within a point of each other.

Velez Sarsfield, the opening championship winners, were sharing the lead with Lanus, who had been joint runners-up in the first stage.

It loos as if for the first time in the five seasons since the two-phase championship was introduced, the same club might win both stages, and become a real champion.

Velez, Argentina's best team for over three years, have walloped both close rivals Lanus and Boca Juniors 5-1 in the present tournament, but there is a question mark hanging over them.

Carlos Bianchi, their coach during this successful period, left to join Italy's Roma shortly before the recess and with him went captain and international defender Roberto Trotta. Another former Velez player, Osvaldo Piazza, was left in charge. However, in their next game they played rather poorly and were held to a 0-0 draw by bottom club Argentinos Juniors.

Bianchi's more recent successes were obtained despite never being able to field the same team in his last 53 games, and while not buying any players. Ten were sold for a total of over $10million while he was in charge.

Goodbye Velez . . . Bianchi bids farewell

Apart from that 5-1 loss to Velez Sarsfield – when three players, including Maradona, were sent off – Boca won five of their last six games to move to within a point of the leaders. With Cameroon striker Alphonse Tehami back in the lineup, their latest and most important triumph was a 4-1 win over eternal rivals River Plate.

Chief architect of that victory was Claudio Caniggia with three second half goals. This left Caniggia on 10 goals, jointly with Alberto Macrico (Gimnasia La Plata), out for this year with a snapped achilles tendon, and two behind Ariel Lopez (Lanus).

Gimnasia (La Plata) are also a point behind the leaders while bottom team Argentinos Juniors have improved since former World Cup defender Jorge Olguin took over as coach, but apparently too late to save them from relegation.

ERIC WEIL

Colombia

Deserving Deportivo take title

DEPORTIVO CALI fully deserved to win the title for the first time in 22 years.

They had won the season's two regular championships although in the semi-final and final rounds they only got through thanks to the four bonus points obtained for their two titles earlier in the season.

Millonarios, of Bogota, finished level on points at the top of the final round with no bonus points, but had to be satisfied with second place. However, they compete in next year's Libertadores Cup, along with the champions.

For Deportivo Cali, founded in 1918, it was their sixth title. Coached by Fernando Castro, their leading players were Edison Mafla – second highest scorer with 32 goals behind Atletico Junior's Ivan Valenciano with 36 – Oscar Pareja, Andres Estrada, Walter Escobar and Miguel Calero.

Defending champions Atletico Junior did not get past the semi-final round and America (Calif) finished bottom (with Nacional) in the four-team final round. The strain of competing in the final stages of the Libertadores Cup, as well as the twice-weekly domestic final round games, finally took its toll.

Nacional dropped their goalkeeper, Rene Higuita, for missing too many training sessions. Quindio's Victor Mafla was suspended for 40 matches for attacking a referee.

Atletico Junior players were attacked by fans following their 1-1 semi-final round draw with Nacional in Medellin and three of them were badly injured.

America defender Freddy Tierradentro's heart stopped after he hit his head during the 2-0 win over Deportivo Cali and he had to be rushed to hospital.

The government continues to investigate drug-money involvement in soccer clubs and is now forcing them to declare the sources of their capital. The movement of transfer funds is also being investigated. The president and principal share holder of the Santa Fe club, Cesar Villagas, was detained by police to answer charges of laundering drug money.

ERIC WEIL

Chile

Talent drain continues

COLO COLO lead the First Division by eight points after 14 games, but nevertheless sold three international first team players to Mexican clubs.

Javier Marges went to America, Miguel Ramirez to Monterrey and Gabriel Mendoza to Nuevo Leon. And more talent was set to leave the domestic league a few days later when champions Universidad de Chile appeared to be on the verge of selling their international striker, Marcelo Salas, 22, to Spain's Las Palmas. However, the deal hit a snag and was not completed.

Universidad de Chile, champions for the last two seasons, are nine points behind the leaders with a game in hand. Their league form suffered having reached the semi-final of the Libertadores Cup – but since being knocked out they have improved, beating rivals Universidad Catolica 3-0.

Catolica coach Manuel Pellegrini dismissed former Argentine international defender Sergio Vasquz due to poor form, but a few days later Pellegrini himself was dismissed and replaced by national junior team coach Fernando Carvallo.

ERIC WEIL

Elsewhere in South America

BOLIVIA

Real Santa Cruz won the first of the season's titles 3-2 on penalties against The Strongest, following a 0-0 draw in their third play-off.

PARAGUAY

Leading teams Olimpia, the champions, and Cerro Porteno were knocked out in the semi-finals of the First Division opening championship on penalties, by Sportivo Luqueno and Guarani respectively.

PERU

Sporting Cristal went to the top of the Decentralised Championship table and are heading for their third consecutive title. Former leaders Alianza Lima drew in the derby with Universitario. The two are joint second, four points behind Sporting Cristal, after 14 games.

ECUADOR

Emelec continue to lead the table, two points ahead of Nacional, but third-placed Barcelona, seven points from the top, have two games in hand. Deportivo Quito's Fabian Cubero is leading scorer with 15 goals (after 16 games) followed by Ariel Graziani (Emelec) with 13.

URUGUAY

Penarol won the opening tournament by one point from Defensor Sporting, with Nacional a further point back.

Penarol, who have been champions for the last three years, can make it four in a row if they also win the second stage, which began on July 21.

A poll to find out why fewer people go to watch soccer in Uruguay showed 62 per cent are afraid of spectator violence, which has caused a number of deaths in recent years. The poll showed that a third of fans go to stadiums less than before.

A problem on the park

The crowds for Major Laague Soccer are impressive but, asks Paul Gardner, where are the players?

Record crowd . . . fans packed Giants stadium for the FIFA All-Star game against Brazil

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER marches on – if not triumphantly, then certainly with growing confidence. The worst fear – that the league wouldn't last out the season – has been emphatically put to rest.

There is an atmosphere of optimism around the MLS office, primarily because the crowds have been so much better than expected. A league average of over 20,000 per game isn't bad by anybody's standards. That has answered one of the biggest questions: yes, there are enough fans to sustain a pro league.

The next question was: are there enough American players to sustain the league? That, too, has been answered. The answer is no.

MLS is an ill-digested mixture of some very good players, a majority of good players, and far too many poor players. The problem is that the poor players are holding the league back.

That was made crystal clear in New Jersey's Giants Stadium, when the league held its all-star game. The fans were there in force, a crowd of 78,416, to see a splendid game put on by 34 of the league's best players.

This was not a game dominated by star foreign imports: 21 of the players were Americans. But beyond those all-stars the American talent begins to drop off. On each of the 10 MLS teams there are at least two or three starters, sometimes more, who are simply not ready for pro soccer.

It's not surprising, really, given their background. They come from the college ranks, or from indoor soccer, or from one of the mediocre semi-pro leagues. The hope that they would turn into pro-level players overnight has not worked.

So the MLS, which has done a pretty remarkable job in quickly establishing credibility, faces a dilemma. That credibility will not be maintained for long unless the level of play is improved. The only way to do that quickly – and it needs to be done quickly – is to import more foreign players.

A tricky move for a league that said, from the start, that one of its main aims was to develop American players. But MLS will likely bite the bullet and make the move – which, perversely, could well turn out to be the most significant step towards developing better American players.

For far too long it has been held that the colleges would be the nursery – simply because that is the way it is done here in basketball and gridiron and, to a lesser extent, baseball. That clearly isn't working in soccer.

The problem was further highlighted when the US men's team failed – once again – to get out of the first round of the Olympic competition. A team of basically 22-year-old Americans playing against others of the same age from Argentina and Portugal. The difference, the crucial factor that always works against the Americans: the Argentines and Portuguese have had several years of pro experience, while the Americans have had only college soccer.

College soccer – in which they're lucky to play 25 games a year, always with players of their own age, never with, older, experienced pros.

Until the college authorities alter their attitude to soccer – at the moment they treat it as a minor annoyance rather than a major sport – something else will have to be put in place for the training of young players.

MLS chairman Alan Rothenberg has already talked, openly and realistically, of the possibility that – if, or when, the MLS starts paying real money – young players will bypass the colleges and join the MLS straight from high school. That is almost treasonous talk in this education-conscious country, but patience with the college system is running out.

Two more foreign players per team should make a marked improvement on the field. But MLS will need the permission of the US Soccer Federation. So one more foreigner may be all it can get.

At least the way to solve the level-of-play problem is clear, and there appears to be general agreement that, if the fans are to keep coming, action must be taken.

Not so easy is the matter of two cities where the crowds have not been so good: Denver and Tampa. Tampa was a great success story back in the 1970s, when Rowdies ruled the roost. Now, Tampa Bay Mutiny share the stage with a mass of other sporting activities.

At least Mutiny are a winning team. Not so Colorado Rapids. Under English coach Bob Houghton the Rapids have been playing some pretty standard no-frills soccer, they have been losing, and the fans have been staying away.

The standard American way of solving poor attendances is to pick up the team and move the entire operation to another city. That could happen – Chicago is said to be keen on getting a team, and MLS would dearly love to be there. But there is no soccer stadium in the Windy City. Soldier Field, used for the opening game of World Cup 94 is scheduled for major redevelopment, even for demolition.

Things have been looking a bit better for NY/NJ MetroStars. After the dismissal of Eddie Firmani, a new chapter began with the arrival of Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz. Italy's early exit from Euro 96 helped, too, as it meant the Metros got their Italian star Roberto Donadoni back earlier than expected. Now, with the USA out of the Olympics, the Olympian MetroStars will be available: Miles Joseph, AJ Wood, and Damian Silvera.

Their situation merely underlines the player development problem. Joseph, Wood and Silvera represent the cream of the current college crop – but, at 22, they are promising, rather than mature, players. They probably need a season to reach the required MLS level.

Nevertheless, it is an achievement for MLS that all three have signed with the league, and not opted to try their luck in Europe. Another big boost for MLS credibility came when national team player Joe-Max Moore announced that he was returning from Germany (from Second Division Nuremberg) to join New England Revolution.

But the massive fan turnouts remain the most encouraging sign of all. That MLS all-star game, for instance. You could say that the 78,416 fans only turned out to watch the second game – the FIFA World All-Stars against the Brazilian Olympic team. Wrong. The vast majority were in their seats for the first game, and they roared and cheered vigorously throughout the match.

MEXICO More daft than draft

A FEW YEARS ago our League officers approved a hare-brained scheme called 'The Draft' with the objective – or so they said – of lowering the market price of players.

The Mexican League pays the highest salaries in all the American continent, and the sad reality has been that most of the time the deals are worked out between clubs before the officials go to the draft – usually a vacation in one of the most fashionable beach resorts in Mexico.

This year they all went to Acapulco and the Federation had a list of 339 players available in the open market. Naturally the list is prepared by the clubs, because the Players' Association have no say.

Only 89 of the 339 players had deals negotiated. The club that had the best income from this operation was Pumas UNAM, sponsored by a corporation with many rich alumni of UNAM, the largest university in the country.

Pumas were able to sell four top players, earning almost four million dollars. They include Brazilian Jose Damasceno 'Tiba', sold to Atlante of Mexico City for £1.6million, and Claudio Suarez, the best Mexican stopper, for £960,000.

In the meantime the Copa Mexico is being played following a complicated scheme, with the participation of 18 Premier League clubs and 15 from First Division 'A' (equivalent to the old Second Division) including recently-promoted Pachuca, one of the pioneer teams in Mexican soccer, formed by British mining engineers at the turn of the century.The Copa Mexico is a lacklustre tournament, with most of the Premier teams fielding reserves and using the event as a pre-season warm-up.

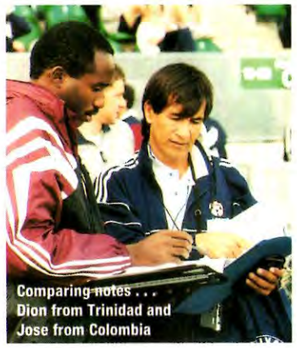
Champions Necaxa sold five players as part of a drive from Televisa to get rid of all investments not directly related to television production. America have an uncertain future although they retained most of their players and hired Ricardo Lavolpe as manager.

All in all, the season looks promising, particularly for Cruz Azul (now with Victor Manuel Vucetich, a Mexican manager with three League titles in the last five years) and Atletico Celaya, who have combined Butragueno with another Spanish player, Michel, as well as signing the Chilean Richard Zambrano and young Mexicans Reyes, Soto and Santana.

CARLOS F RAMIREZ

FOOTBALL COACHES AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Convention 1996



Comparing notes . . . Dion from Trinidad and Jose from Colombia

IN BETWEEN the semi-finals and Final of Euro 96, AFCAT held its third National Coaches Convention at Milton Keynes. As well as the many UK members who attended, representatives from 15 other countries and regions – including Australia, Japan, Europe, Colombia, Trinidad & Tobago and large contingents from South Africa and the USA – were also there.

Wilf McGuinness, the former 'Busby Babe' and ex-manager of Manchester United, was our guest of honour at the banquet on Saturday evening and entertained us with some great stories about his days at the club.

The presentations for the whole convention were provided by:-

DAY 1

Jan Olde Rickerink (Hol)	The Ajax system
John Cartwright	Building from the back
Zissis Pananikolaou (Gre)	Keeping the attention of young players
Zdenek Sivek (Cze)	Developing a session for youth
Dario Gradi	Turning with the ball – the technique
Steve McClaren	Movement and shooting – drills and techniques
Greg Davies & Zvi Friedman	En linea – computer technology analysing team and player performance

DAY 2

Mike Donohoe (Aus)	Development of team play
Amnon Raz (Israel)	Technique and skill
Paul Cacolice (USA)	Five speeds of a goalkeeper
John Tuck	adidas fitness programme
Birger Peiterson (Den)	What can young players learn from star performers
Roger Wilkinson (NZ)	Developing touch and vision
George Perry III (USA)	Transitional play
Bill Songhurst	Improving mobility, agility and foot speed

DAY 3

Mike Crawford & Norman Sim	Combination play
Dario Gradi	Turning with the ball – in practice
Roy Hodgson (Inter Milan)	Crossing and attacking play
John Cartwright	Rotational technical warm up and warm down

Bill Beswick, one of the country's leading psychological experts on the sport's effect on the mind and performance, summarised the events of the Convention with his final thoughts. There were four general themes running through the presentations:

- 1. the risks that coaches take by approaching the playing of football in a fresh way.
- 2. the learning process which is non-stop.
- 3. the changes being encountered through international contacts.
- 4. the sharing of responsibility in the development of the learning programme.

It was necessary to evolve, particularly for the younger player:

- Repetition of sessions and work without repeating.
- Repetition without boredom.
- Letting them make mistakes, observe, realise the problems and then step in.

For all those members and guests who were present, thank you for your participation and for all the clinicians – well done – you gave us all food for thought.

Pointing the way . . . Roy Hodgson in action

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WORLD SOCCER

2002, a football oddity

ALMOST ALL the celebrations were called off. The headlines lasted for only two or three days. Now that the initial disgust has worn off, nobody wants to think about it, or football, or anything but the Olympic Games.

J.League attendances crashed directly after the vote, as the implications quickly sank in. The absolute low was reached on June 8 in Sapporo, when the touring game between Cerezo Osaka and JEF United Ichihara attracted only 2,218 fans. Several other matches fell below the 5,000 mark in June.

The attendances have started to recover, and the authorities are making polite, diplomatic noises about the World Cup. They are, however, seething under the surface. Everyone was left with the impression that FIFA simply didn't care about Japan, South Korea or the 2002 World Cup.

With the Japanese outwardly as diplomatic as ever, it was left to the foreign managers to state what was being said by everyone off the record and in the popular press.

"Since FIFA have chosen to do it this way," said Holger Osieck of Urawa Reds, "I don't think it can be changed. Personally, though, I think it should have gone to a single country. That was only common sense. I don't believe that the people who made the decision at FIFA have any idea of what problems exist between Japan and South Korea, and of how much must be resolved. It is very unfortunate."

"I can't believe it," said Nicanor of Kashima Antlers. "Just thinking about it makes me angry. Japan has worked so hard for global football, and South Korea has done nothing."

It is hard in a few words to describe the problems to people who don't know Far Eastern politics and history. It is still even illegal to sing songs in Japanese in South Korea. If the World Cup theme song included some Japanese, it wouldn't be possible to play it in South Korea yet. That law, no doubt, will be changed, but it is no ordinary task to reduce the underlying bitterness which goes all of the way back to the colonial period.

FIFA has shown, at the very least, remarkable naivety. It is a bit like suggesting, at the last moment, that Atlanta should share the Olympics with Havana. It is no wonder that the Japanese don't want to think about it. Especially when South Korea, by catching up, was quick to claim that it had won. "It is obvious that South Korea is the winner," said Federation president Chung Mong-Joon. "We started our campaign very late, and turned things around in just a little over two years."

From the start, there was a strong feeling in Japan that South Korea was mainly in the contest in order to block the Japanese. The bid was made only when Japan defeated South Korea in the qualifiers for the 94 World Cup. Korean television described that defeat as the greatest humiliation since annexation. A few days later, after plumbing the depths, Korean spirits rose again when Iraq's late equaliser against Japan put South Korea through after all. The World Cup bid was then stapled together in just a few weeks, riding that wave of euphoria.

Realistically, though, it is questionable whether South Korea ever had any prospect of building the infrastructure to host the World Cup on its own. Its league is also moribund, with attendances under 2,000 very common. (South Korea's proposal for 16 stadia one more than Japan's) was quickly slashed to five after the FIFA vote.

The Japanese, by contrast, now find themselves in a very difficult position. They bent over backwards to satisfy FIFA's high requirements for a 32-team World Cup, and all of their 15 proposed stadia are real projects. A lot of money has already been invested to purchase the land. One, the Nagai Stadium in Osaka, has just opened.

If Japan had lost outright, that would have been sad for the J.League but politically less complicated. It is not going to be easy now to persuade some local authorities to give up their plans if other neighbours are still going to get the World Cup. A lot more sensitivity than has been shown so far will be required to control the fall-out. Japan's initial proposal, of course opposed by South Korea, is to increase the number of teams. So much for all of that nonsense about a 32-team World Cup being too big for any one country!

What hurts the Japanese most is that FIFA did it the wrong way around, breaking its own rules to impose co-hosting. The Japanese take Fair Play seriously, and are deeply shocked. Nevertheless, they have already started serious work to make the co-hosting a success. The officials of other countries could learn a lot from the Japanese reaction. But they should also know that no-one is in any mood to be trodden on any more.

So what are the concrete issues to be resolved by the end of the year? In a word, everything.

Which stadia should be used? How many teams should enter? Should Japan and South Korea qualify automatically? If so, should Asia be given more places? If so, which continents would lose places? Should the games be divided evenly between Japan and South Korea (though Japan has the superior infrastructure and three times the population of South Korea)? Where should the final be played? How should the money be divided up (the yen and the won have very different values, so both the costs and the profits will be much higher in Japan)? Is visa-free travel possible (it isn't available at the moment)? What about the continuing suggestions to invite North Korea? What about the sponsors? How can FIFA restore its credibility in the Far East?

There isn't much time if everything is to be built in time. FIFA had also better deal with these questions fast if it intends, as everybody suspects, to ask Japan to foot most of the bill in return for a tenfold increase in broadcasting fees.

All that, and the fact that the Japanese and South Koreans don't like each other! In the long run, since no-one can let the World Cup fail, it will probably succeed. But it is going to be an interesting learning process, and FIFA may well end up wondering whether this was really the sensible way to embarrass Joao Havelange.

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

Protests . . . Grampus Eight fans make their point

JAPAN IN BRIEF

THE SUMMER has brought its usual spate of comings and goings in Japan, but none drew the headlines like Leonardo's transfer to Paris St-Germain.

During Leonardo's spell at Kashima Antlers, Japanese fans took him to their hearts. He had two grand finales. The first was at the Antlers' stadium on July 3, against Verdy Kawasaki. Then, on July 6, he played alongside Dragan Stojkovic in the J.League All-Star game, the first match at Osaka's new Nagai Stadium. Both times, he was treated to rapturous, tearful farewells.

As a career move, Leonardo made the only possible choice. Twenty-six is no age for a player of his calibre to be playing in the J.League, especially with the 1998 World Cup on the horizon.

Leonardo's departure is a heavy blow for Kashima's title hopes – they currently lie second in the J.League – especially as Leonardo still had six months left on his contract.

The problems will only get worse, with Jorginho's contract also expiring at the end of the year. Antlers have also fired their injury-prone Brazilian defender, Mozer, signed from Benfica last August.

Grampus Eight fans had their hearts in their mouths when it was confirmed that Atletico Madrid were talking with Dragan Stojkovic, but it looks for the moment as if he will stay.

Manager Arsene Wenger, however, who worked the miracle in Nagoya, also has his eyes set on Europe.

Another player attracting Spanish attention is Olympic captain Masakiyo Maezono of Yokohama Flugels. Sevilla are watching him

Urawa Reds have acquired Danish Euro 96 midfielder Brian Steen Nielson on a six-month loan from OB Odense. Sanfrecce Hiroshima have signed a Brazilian midfielder, Antonio Carlos Santos from Veracruz of Mexico. And Soviet World Cup veteran Sergei Aleinikov quit Gamba Osaka after being left out since the start of the season by new manager Josip Kuze. Paulo Emilio has resigned as manager of Cerezo Osaka after a disappointing start to this year's J.League. He is replaced by head coach Hiroshi Sowa, a former national team midfielder.

Verdy Kawasaki have lost Donizete to Benfica, but the team continues to improve with fine performances up front by three youngsters. Gen Shintetsu (a North Korean resident of Japan), Takanordi Nunobe and Caico in the attack.

The club has also reinforced its defence by bringing in 21-year-old Brazilian Argelico Fucksl. The club are sticking by that spelling, but the name appears as Argel on the team rosters.

JAPAN confirmed that they are well on course to defend the Asian Cup in the UAE in December with a couple of fine wins in the Kirin Cup.

First, Japan overcame Yugoslavia 1-0 at the National Stadium in Tokyo thanks to a 52nd minute goal by Kazuyoshi Miura. Yugoslavia brought a strong side, including Jugovic, Savicevic and Stojkovic, but were outplayed.

Mexico roared to an early two-goals lead against Japan in Fukuoka, but Morishima, Miura and Soma struck back to give the home team a dramatic 3-2 win. "We have played a lot of hard opponents," said Japan captain Masami Ihara, "and now we have the confidence, and we know what to do as a team."

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA's winless run lasted for 20 games. Manager Oscar was sacked after finishing the first half of the J.League season with 15 losses in 15 matches. "I thought I'd be given more time," said Oscar, who was finally removed on the direct orders of the president of Kyocera, the club's backer. Head coach Jorge Yonashiro has taken over.

TOSHIBA are the J.League's newest affiliate members. The club, which used to play in the Tokyo area, has moved to Sapporo, the capital of Hokkaido in the far north. Consadole are now climbing the JFL table and could reach the J.League as early as next year.

IF THERE was one single political disadvantage which really hurt Japan's World Cup bid, it was the lack of a Japanese representative on the FIFA executive committee.

With the decision to expand Asian representation, the FA of Japan has decided to put up J.League chairman Saburo Kawabuchi as its candidate. Kawabuchi said that his first move would be to telephone South Korea federation president Chung and ask for his support. The presence of both would surely help in the difficult job of coordinating plans for 2002.

MIKE PLASTOW & MICHI ISHIJIMA

ASIA & OCEANIA IN BRIEF

Saudis target Iordanescu

SAUDI ARABIA

MANY CLUBS in Saudi Arabia have been in the hunt for new managers before the start of the 1996/97 season. Champions Al Hilal made a bold bid to appoint Romania Anghel Iordanescu on a two-year contract. They face a battle with the Romanian federation to release him.

Al Hilal took the title for a record seventh time after their 2-1 win over Al Ahly of Jeddah in the final play-off.

Saudi target . . . Anghel Iordanescu

ASIAN CUP

THREE-times Asian Cup champions Iran qualified for the finals of the 11th Asian Cup with an impressive all win record from Group 5. In the Group 3 decider, Thailand drew 2-2 with hosts Singapore to win a place in the finals.

From Group 8 Uzbekistan finally scraped through to the finals ahead of Tajikistan. In the Group 10 decider Kuwait forced a face-saving goalless draw at home with a tough Lebanese side, and secured a place in the finals.

Syria, Qatar and Kazakhstan are evenly poised in the wide open Group 7 with two wins each. Earlier China, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia joined holders Japan and hosts UAE in the 12-team finals to be held in Abu Dhabi in December this year.

BAHRAIN

THE TOP four clubs played off in a new concept called 'The golden square', and Al Ahli finished first. This was their first championship since 1977 and their fourth overall.

In the Amiri Cup Final, Muharraq won for the 18th time, beating Bahrain 4-3 on penalties.

BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH has pulled out of the Asian Cup because of lack of funds, and postponed the curtain raiser DMFA Cup. The Mayor of Dhaka, Mohamad Hanif, has been appointed FA President, a post that was empty for 22 months.

CHINA

FOOTBALL in China is still being hampered by the 'evil whistles' which are lessening the professional game's creditability.

The Chinese FA has suspended five of their top refs as the stories about bribes, offered and accepted, grow more and more common.

China is such a huge country that match officials have to travel to almost every fixture on the previous day – or even earlier – and the hosts are responsible for their board and lodging – an obvious route to coercion.

The first half of the third professional season ended with Dalian leading, after six wins and five draws. They have not lost any of their 27 home games since the pro-league began in 1994, when they were the first champions

Klaus Schlappner, the German coach of the national team, lost his job after a defeat by a weak Yemen team.

Shanghai have given up hopes of signing Frenchman Christian Perez after he failed a medical.

INDONESIA

Lazio rounded off their two-week Asian tour with a 6-2 win over Indonesia. Lazio won all of their matches, beating China's national side 2-1, and Chinese club sides Taishan Jinan 1-0 and Changehun 1-0.

National coach Andi Muhamad Teguh died of a heart attack while watching a league match. He was 41.

KUWAIT

Newly-appointed Czech manager Milan Macala guided the national side to the 1996 Asian Cup finals, following a thrilling 5-3 victory in Beirut over Lebanon.

Macala, who succeeded Valeri Lobanovski, will lead Kuwait in their 1998 World Cup qualifiers.

Al Arabi won the Emir's Cup final for a record 10th time in their history, with a 2-1 victory over Al Jahraa.

MALAYSIA

EAST COAST side Negri Sembilan are the new glory boys of the Premier League. They completed the first stage with a comfortable lead of seven points from Sabah on 27 points and Selangor in third on 25.

NORTH KOREA

LOCOMOTIVE won the title on goal difference ahead of Rinyongsu. Both the teams collected 41 points from 22 matches. Last year's champions April 15 finished third with 40 points.

OMAN

THE FEDERATION sacked Jozef Venglos and appointed Mahmoud El-Gohary as their national team manager following their early exit from the 1996 Asian Cup. El-Gohary previously coached Egypt in the 1990 World Cup.

SINGAPORE

GEYLANG UNITED, under Iranian coach Jalal Talebi, won the first phase of the new S-League. In the series decider, Geylang, without two key Iranian imports Khackpour and Mansurian, who were on Asian Cup duty, managed a 2-2 draw with Woodlands Wellington.

Barry Whitbread will coach the national side in the Tiger Beer Cup. Singapore meet rivals Malaysia in the opening match on September 1.

SOUTH KOREA

HYUNDAI TIGERS are leading the Korean table with 16 points from six matches. Newly-promoted Samsung Blues are in second place with 15 points. Reigning champions Illhwa Chunma have yet to win a point.

Preparing for the Asian Cup preliminaries, South Korea stunned visiting Juventus 4-0 and Milan 3-2, but lost to Stuttgart 4-3 and the Swedish national team 2-0.

MOHAMED CHBARO, AZAM MAMHOOD, AIDAN PAYNE, ZHENG MING

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS defied the odds when retaining the League title. They lost two key players before the season began, and coach Mirko Bazic midway through it.

Knights, in their fifth grand final in six years, made a tentative start against Marconi and the first half, although never dull, produced no goals.

On the hour, Marconi goalkeeper Bob Catlin failed to hold a cross from Vinko Buljubasic, and Andrew Marth headed in. Adrian Cervinski scored from close range in the 74th minute.

FIJI

NAVUA and Nadi captured the first two of the five major domestic trophies at stake this season.

Navua shocked highly-fancied Suva at the capital city's National Stadium with a 2-0 victory in the Fiji Games Final, while Nadi made the most of home advantage and overcame Lautoka 4-0 at Prince Charles Park to lift the FA Cup.

NEW ZEALAND

WAITAKERE CITY, late winners of the old national league in 1993, claimed the revamped 1995-96 version to provide New Zealand national team coach Keith Pritchett with an appropriate end to his club career.

Waitakere defeated Miramar Rangers by the surprisingly wide scoreline of 5-2 in the grand final.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

LAS UNITED retained the Honiara Super League title, the most coveted honour of Solomons club soccer, after beating SIPL 4-1 in the grand final.

TAHITI

ThE national side defeated Solomon Islands in the Oceania Confederation cup semi-final, winning the second leg in Papeete 2-1, almost exactly six months after the 1-0 win in the first leg.

Due to the Solomon Islands Football Federation's financial problems, the match was postponed several times and proceeded only after the Oceania Football Confederation had threatened SIFF with a heavy fine and possible suspension from FIFA.

Tahiti now meet Australia in the final.

PAUL MOON

World Cup 1998 Qualifiers

Super Eagles heading for France

NIGERIA, on paper at least, look the most likely of Africa's ever-improving teams to launch a serious assault on the 1998 World Cup in France.

There were big sighs of relief when FIFA decided not to ban the Super Eagles from the qualifiers after their refusal to play in the last African Nations Cup finals following a political squabble with their South African hosts.

The rulers showed even greater benevolence when the draw for the final round of African qualifiers was made ahead of the FIFA congress in Zurich. Nigeria, one of the five seeded teams, were given an almost clear path to the finals in 1998 after being paired with Burkina Faso, Guinea and Kenya.

Their opponents are mediocre at best, even if the Kenyans caused the greatest upset of the first round of knockout qualifying matches by eliminating Algeria, and it will be the biggest upset of the last decade of African soccer if the Nigerians do not romp through.

For the four other seeds, though, things will not be as easy. If the upsets of the first round are anything to go by, there is every likelihood that there will be some new faces for 1998.

The continent, remember, now has five places at its disposal and seasoned campaigners like Cameroon, Egypt and Morocco will have to show a major improvement in current form if they are to book tickets for France. Cameroon are exceedingly fortunate to have missed being paired with stronger opposition in Group 4.

Their opponents will be Angola, Togo and Zimbabwe, whom they beat 3-1 in Yaounde last time out to secure a berth in the 1994 finals in the USA.

Angola looked an impressive outfit in the Nations Cup finals in January, despite not making it into the quarter-finals, and gave further notice of their growing standing with home and away wins over Uganda in the preliminary round. New coach Manuel 'Neca' Gomes has shuffled his team around somewhat but the firepower upfront, led by Paulao of Portugal's Benfica, remains as potent as ever.

Zimbabwe, who edged out Madagascar 4-3 on aggregate in the preliminary round, have given glimpses of their potential on many previous occasions but never qualified for a major tournament. Bruce Grobbelaar, now nearly 40 and waiting to be confirmed as assistant coach to the Swiss Marc Duvillard, is likely to continue in goal and Coventry City striker Peter Ndlovu has apologised for his loutish behaviour after Duvillard left him and brother Adam out of the team in early June.

Egypt, with two previous World Cup finals appearances under their belt, will not have been pleased to have been paired with Tunisia in Group 2. The two Arabic-speaking countries have shared a heated rivalry over the years and for once it will be the Tunisians, runners-up at the 1996 Nations Cup finals, who start as favourites.

Coach Henri Kasperczak's team were a surprise package in South Africa at the beginning of the year, and they then went on to qualify for the Olympics and easily disposed of troublesome Rwanda 5-1 on aggregate in the preliminaries.

Also in the group is George Weah's Liberia, 5-2 aggregate prelim winners over Gambia despite having to play the home leg in neutral Ghana because of the ongoing civil war. Even with the great individual skills of multiple-award winner Weah, plus the impressive European pedigree of Christopher Wreh, James Debbah and Joe Nagbe, among others, the Lone Star sorely lack match practice.

Also in the group is Namibia, who won their first-ever World Cup tie by beating Mozambique 2-0 in Windhoek and then shocked all and sundry by forcing a 1-1 draw in Maputo in the return leg. That Mozambique did not call upon leading striker Chiquinho Conde is a mistake they will have to wrestle with until the 2002 World Cup qualifiers roll around.

World Cup hopes . . . Ghana's Anthony Yeboah

In Group 5, Morocco are seeded to go through and are desperate to atone for the disappointing performance in Orlando two years ago when they should have done better.

Henri Michel, formerly coach of the French national team and in charge of Cameroon at the last World Cup finals, has been brought in to build a new side. He has already put his new-look team through five international friendlies with some success. But having been paired with Ghana will have come as a shock.

The Black Stars have the best record of any team in African competition but have yet to make it to the World Cup finals. They have a host of undoubted talent at their disposal, the majority of it graduates from recent success at junior world championships at both Under-17 and Under-20 level.

They can also call upon ageing veterans Abedi Pele and Anthony Yeboah, who are keen to round off their careers with an appearance on the World Cup stage. Both were missing as Ghana squeaked home 2-1 over Tanzania in the first round tie. They took something of a gamble by fielding their Olympic Under-23 squad.

A goalless draw in Dar-es-Salaam seemed to justify the decision but Ghana almost threw it away in the second leg, which was replayed after the original match had been halted by a rainstorm. Ghana took 70 minutes to score through Samuel Johnson, the midfielder on his way to Anderlecht, but it took the Taifa Stars just 60 seconds to equalise through Mohamed Hussein – and score a seemingly priceless away goal.

Augustine Ahinful came to Ghana's rescue with 10 minutes left by scoring a second goal for the 2-1 triumph.

A more serious looking team can be expected in the group matches, where Burundi and Gabon are the other combatants. Ironically, Ghana's last World Cup expedition with an under-strength side was to Bujumbura during the 1994 World Cup qualifiers and their 1-0 loss to Burundi was the death knell for their hopes of qualifying for the USA.

The identity of the fifth seeded team for the group stage was not announced until two days before the draw in Zurich and African champions South Africa were somewhat peeved not to have been given the top spot in view of their recent Nations Cup triumph.

Instead it was Zambia, quite rightfully, who were made top seeds in Group 3 – only then to draw South Africa in their section as well. The two countries have played five internationals since South Africa's return to international football in 1992, with Zambia having the edge with two wins, two draws and a single defeat. But the tide in recent games has turned South Africa's way and it is Bafana Bafana who will be fancied to come through for their first-ever World Cup appearance.

South Africa looked polished in their 4-0 aggregate triumph over Malawi – a tie they should have won by many more goals had Leeds United reject Phil Masinga not had a bad day in the first leg in Blantyre.

There is also one other rider in the group – the enigmatic Zaire, whose team has enormous potential but a propensity for mercurial form.

At the Nations Cup at the beginning of the year they were fraught with internal strife, despite a star-studded line-up that included captain Kabeya Mukanya, Nzelo Lembi of Belgian champions Club Brugge, German-based Michel Dinzey and Lille's Roger Hioto. Understandably, they did not get past the last eight.

But with Muntunbile Santos back in charge, they dispatched Mauritius 7-0 on aggregate in the qualifiers with two goals each for Elonga Ekakla, Tondelua Mbullua and Felix-Michel Ngonge, who was born in Belgium where he plays for Harelbeke and had never been to Zaire before playing the second leg in Kinshasa.

Zaire, who were black Africa's first World Cup representatives some 22 years ago, have limitless potential but a seemingly suicidal administration and a bunch of bickering players that continually retard their progress. If they sort this out, they could, however, shock both the South Africans and Zambians.

MARK GLEESON

AFRICA IN BRIEF

West Africa

IN **NIGERIA**, Bendel Insurance have a slender two point lead over Sharks FC as the championship reaches the halfway point. Top scorer is Sharks' David Doe with eight goals.

After turning down the national team job in the Ivory Coast, Frenchman Philippe Troussier is now planning a return to the country to take over again at ASEC Abidjan.

Stella Abidjan are through to the quarter-finals of the West African Football Union Cup after the withdrawal of Ghana's giants Ashanti Kotoko. They now play compatriots Sabe di Bouna, who won 3-0 on aggregate in their first round tie against USFA of Burkina Faso.

Dragons Oueme and Lions are the leaders in Group A of the championship in **BENIN**, while Energie are ahead in Group B.

Central Africa

FORMER **MALAWI** international captain Young Chimodzi has made a successful transition to coach, taking his club Silver Strikers to the top of the table in the Super League alongside Bata Bullets and Admarc Tigers.

Jean Manga Onguene is the new national team coach of **CAMEROON**, replacing Jules Nyongha after the country's debacle in the African Nations Cup finals. Onguene, a past winner of the African Footballer of the Year award, will be assisted by junior national team coach Dominique Wansi and Andre Nguidjol Nleno. Onguene was an assistant himself at the 1990 World Cup finals. Unisport Bafang continue to have a one-point lead over Tonnerre Yaounde after 18 matches of the championship.

Portuguese coach Manuel Gomes, known as Neca in his playing days, has taken over from Carlos Alhinho as coach of **ANGOLA**. Neca was assistant at Benfica in Portugal last season.

East Africa

FIVE **RWANDAN** internationals deserted the team in Paris en route from the World Cup qualifying tie in Tunisia.

Asuman Lubowa's career as the new coach of **UGANDA** got off to a bad start with a poor run of performances in four friendlies against Kenya and then elimination from the World Cup by Angola.

North Africa

CLUB AFRICAIN secured the championship in **TUNISIA** with a five-point lead over second-placed Etoile Sahel. The former African champions amassed 57 points from their 24 matches to 52 for Etoile Sahel. Last season's winners CS Sfaxien finished fourth. Frenchman Didier Notheaux, previously with Second Division Sochaux, has taken over from Faouzi Benzerti as coach of Esperance of Tunis. Benzerti is going to the United Arab Emirates.

Olympic Khourigba of **MOROCCO** won the Arab club championship with a 3-1 victory in the final over Al Faycali of Jordan. Raja Casablanca won the Moroccan league, securing the title two matches from the end of the season. Khouribga were second, with defending champions COD Meknes way down in eighth. Raja won the double for the first time in the club's illustrious history. Hassania Agadir and Wydad Fes were promoted to replace relegated Ittihad Casablanca and Ittihad Ranger.

In **ALGERIA**, the league has been suspended after the team's shock elimination from the World Cup qualifiers, leaving USM Alger and USM Ain Beida tied at the top of the table.

Southern Africa

ORLANDO PIRATES of **SOUTH AFRICA** suffered a humiliating 5-0 aggregate defeat in the Afro-Asian Cup at the hands of Korea's Ilhwa Chunma. Pirates, winners of last year's African Champions Cup, wasted led several good chances in the goalless first leg in Johannesburg. In the return match in Seoul's Olympic stadium, the African champions had the better of the first 20 minutes but then fell apart and conceded five goals.

Mamelodi Sundowns have replaced Dutch coach Clemens Westerhof with the German coach Reinhard Fabisch, who was in charge of Zimbabwe's strong, but ultimately unsuccessful bid to qualify for the finals of the last World Cup. Westerhof is now at Egyptian club Ismailia.

A judicial inquiry into the running of the game in South Africa has been launched by the sports minister. The South African Football Association's executive president Solomon Morewa is expected to be the main focus of the enquiry.

CAPS United's Joe Mugabe scored a late winner to give his team a 2-1 win over Zimbabwe Saints in the Independence Cup final in **ZIMBABWE**. It was the second trophy win of the season for the Harare club.

In **NAMIBIA**, provincial club Chief Santos from Tsumeb are the early leaders in the league. In the Top Eight Cup, Blue Waters from Walvis Bay beat African Stars 2-1 in the final. Former international Dolphy Campbell has returned to Young Ones after an unsuccessful attempt at finding a club in Turkey.

MARK GLEESON

African cup competitions

Rivals renew hostilities

SOUTH AFRICA and Nigeria finally have their long-awaited soccer showdown in September, but it will be a meeting at club rather than national level

There has been little love between the two countries since last year when South Africa withdrew an invitation to the Nigerians to compete in their annual Four Nations Cup because of the west African country's execution of nine political dissidents.

The tournament served as a warm-up to the African Nations Cup, which South Africa hosted in January and February, and holders Nigeria pulled out of the Nations Cup at the 11th hour in retaliation.

Nigeria's absence from the Nations Cup finals left vexing questions as to South Africa's right to call themselves African champions without having faced a test from the Super Eagles.

The South African Football Association, ever mindful of a marketing opportunity, had been hoping for a rematch at the next Four Nations Cup tournament. However, a little of the spice has been taken away by the pairing of Orlando Pirates and Shooting Stars in the quarter-finals of the African Champions Cup.

The two teams meet over two legs in September, first in Durban and then two weeks later in Ibadan.

Pirates are the defending champions and favourites to win the tie, particularly after getting past BCC Lions of Nigeria last year despite a harassing trip. They can again expect an unfriendly welcome. In Nigeria the practice of making visiting teams uncomfortable has been turned into an art form.

A little more worldly-wise, Pirates promise to be ready this time. Cup-winners Cup-holders, Algeria's JS Kabylie, were given a much easier draw against Angola's Petro Atletico, while Zamalek of Egypt, the other strong candidate for the Champions Cup, meet COD Meknes of Morocco.

MARK GLEESON

COMPETITION

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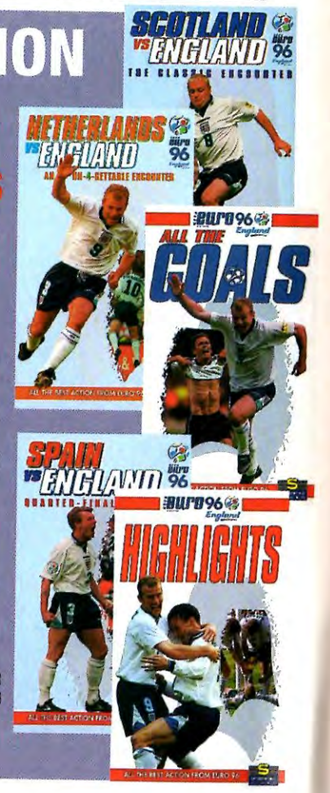


Diary JULY 1996

JULY							
Week	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
29	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
31	29	30	31				

MONDAY, JULY 1

ACTION: Thailand are held 1-1 by Singapore and Burma beat Maldives 3-1 in Asian Cup qualifiers
CZECH REPUBLIC: Thousands of fans welcome home their national team despite defeat in the European Championship Final.
ENGLAND: The FA confirms it will bid to host the 2006 World Cup . . . Paul Gascoigne marries girlfriend Sheryl . . . Manchester United offer Slavia Prague £3.5m for Czech forward Karel Poborsky but face competition

Leaving Japan . . . Leonardo

from Lazio. Wolves fail in a bid for Czech keeper Petr Kouba, who agrees terms with La Coruna . . . Aston Villa hope to sign Portugal defender Fernando Nelson from Sporting.
GERMANY: More than 30,000 fans welcome home the new European champions in Frankfurt – but police report dozens of arrests during celebrations the previous night . . . goalkeeper Andy Kopke considers legal action in his bid to escape a transfer from Eintracht Frankfurt to Stuttgart and join Barcelona.
ITALY: Parma sign Brazilian midfielder Amaral from Palmeiras instead of club-mate Rivaldo . . . Napoli buy Brazilian Olympic midfielder Beto from Botafogo.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA lifts its European competition ban on Torpedo Moscow, who must still pay Austrian club Moedling the fee owed on the transfer of Andrei Kalaitchev.

TUESDAY, JULY 2

BULGARIA: Hristo Stoichkov's brother survives a suicide attempt.
ENGLAND: West Ham complete the free signing of Portuguese winger Paulo Futre from Milan . . . Manchester United are poised to sign Norway striker Ole Gunnar Solskjar from Molde for £1.2m . . . Sir Bert Millichip prepares to step down as FA chairman.
FRANCE: Paris Saint-Germain sign Brazilian midfielder Leonardo, appoint former PSG and Benfica defender Ricardo as general manager with Joel Bats as team coach.
GERMANY: DFB officials confirm that the Henri Delaunay trophy will have to be repaired after the cup and plinth separated during welcome-home celebrations . . . Borussia Dortmund's Czech midfielder Patrik Berger says he wants to play for Liverpool.
ITALY: *Telepiu* unveils a pay-per-view package through which subscribers can watch all their favourite team's league matches . . . Napoli sign striker Nicola Caccia from Piacenza.
JAPAN: Arsene Wenger says he has been approached by Glenn Hoddle to take over as English FA technical director.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA makes the draw for the second round of the African qualifiers for the 1998 World Cup. It is Group 1: Nigeria, Guinea, Kenya and Burkina Faso. Group 2: Egypt, Tunisia, Liberia and Namibia. Group 3: Zambia, South Africa, Zaire and Congo. Group 4: Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Angola and Togo. Group 5: Morocco, Gabon, Ghana and Burundi . . . FIFA says that the first, eight-team FIFA Confederations Cup for the King Fahd Trophy will be played in Saudi Arabia in December 1997. Confirmed participants are Germany, Uruguay, South Africa, Mexico, the winners of the 1996 Asian Cup, the winners of the 1996 Oceania Nations Cup, World Cup-holders Brazil and hosts Saudi Arabia.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3

ENGLAND: Russia striker Sergei Yuran is banned from driving for 18 months and fined £750 with £50 costs for refusing to take a breath test . . . Graeme Souness is appointed new boss of Southampton . . . Chelsea complete the signing of France defender Franck Leboeuf from Strasbourg and close in on Lazio's Roberto Di Matteo . . . Sheffield Wednesday sell Belgian striker Marc Degryse to PSV Eindhoven for £1.8m . . . Birmingham fail to persuade local companies to sponsor the proposed purchase of Jean-Pierre Papin.
SWITZERLAND: Individuals honoured at FIFA Congress include the late Bobby Moore and Henry Kissinger. World champions Brazil continue to top the FIFA rankings with Germany staying second but England moving up from 21 to 13. FIFA's executive accepts a bid worth £1.4billion for TV rights to the 2002 and 2006 World Cups from a consortium formed by marketing partner ISL Marketing and German media group Kirch.

THURSDAY, JULY 4

ENGLAND: Middlesbrough spring the shock of the European summer transfer market when they sign Fabrizio Ravanelli from European champions Juventus for £7m. Ravanelli agrees a four-year contract worth £1.3m a season . . . West Ham sign Romanian striker Florin Raducioiu from Espanyol . . . Ruud Gullit adds to his European collection by bringing in Roberto Di Matteo from Lazio for £3.5m . . . the German Federation pays £20,000 for a full-page advert in *The Times* thanking the English public and Euro 96 organisers for their hospitality and organisation of the tournament.
FRANCE: German sportswear giant adidas takes over Marseille . . . 34 French players are lined up to play abroad in the new season.
ITALY: Milan striker George Weah says he would like to play Major League Soccer at some stage of his career.
SCOTLAND: Rangers pay £2m for Sweden defender Jonas Bjorklund from Vicenza.
SWITZERLAND: The The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) attacks FIFA's decision to award the World Cup 2002 and 2006 rights to Bavarian media mogul Leo Kirch and Swiss-based marketing agency ISL . . . FIFA Congress is considered by observers to have brought president Joao Havelange a victory over his European challengers by voting an extra seat each on the executive to Africa, Asia and Oceania. Congress decides the Soviet Union, dissolved five years ago, may no longer keep its permanent place but its place should go to a UEFA representative. US federation president Alan Rothenberg says the decision is unfair to CONCACAF and the South American confederation. Oceania is upgraded to a fully independent confederation despite opposition from Australia. A German proposal to allow countries more say over domestic competition rules is defeated. Congress also defeats an Argentine move to allow players naturalised in one country to play for that country even if they had already represented their country of birth. A Scottish FA proposal to impose an age limit of 70 on FIFA committee members – thereby forcing FIFA's 80-year-old president Joao Havelange from office – was withdrawn before Congress. FIFA formally admits six new members – Bosnia, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Guam and Andorra – bringing its full membership to 198. Palestine's provisional membership is ratified.

FRIDAY, JULY 5

ENGLAND: Nottingham Forest manager Frank Clark confirms his interest in Croat defender Nikola Jerkan of Oviedo . . . Manchester United strengthen their squad with the £2.7m capture of Norway internationals Ronnie Johnsen from Besiktas and Ole Gunnar Solskjar of Molde . . . Italy midfielder Roberto Di Matteo arrives at Chelsea.
GERMANY: Goalkeeper Andreas Kopke is left without a club when Barcelona pull out of a transfer deal and sign Portugal's Vitor Baia.
HOLLAND: PSV Eindhoven put a price tag of £14m on Brazilian striker Ronaldo.
ITALY: Lazio sign Australia defender Paul Okon from Belgian champions Brugge . . . promoted Reggiana sign Colombia striker Adolfo Valencia from Independiente Santa Fe . . . Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani denies reports that Roberto Baggio may be sold to Paris Saint-Germain or Monaco.
JAPAN: Tosu Futures says they are holding transfer talks with Diego Maradona.
PORTUGAL: International defender Carlos Secretario says he is moving from Porto to Real Madrid on a four-year contract.

Rangers signing . . . Joachim Bjorklund

SATURDAY, JULY 6

BRAZIL: Romario refuses to play for the FIFA All-Stars against Brazil's Olympic squad because he does not want to play against his own country.
SWITZERLAND: Expansion of the Champions League from 16 teams to 24 will be delayed for at least three years if room for the extra fixtures cannot be found . . . the draws for the preliminary round of the UEFA Cup, Champions League and Cup-winners Cup are made.

SUNDAY, JULY 7

ACTION: In the South American World Cup qualifiers, Bolivia beat Venezuela 6-1, Chile beat Ecuador 4-1, Colombia beat Uruguay 3-1 and Peru and Argentina draw 0-0.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA joins in criticism of the TV deal negotiated by FIFA for the 2002 and 2006 World Cups.

MONDAY, JULY 8

BRAZIL: Gremio defender Adilson agrees to join Marseille in preference to Benfica . . . Napoli-bound midfielder Beto pulls a groin muscle in training and has to be omitted from Brazil's Olympic squad.
ENGLAND: Nottingham Forest agree a £1m fee for Croatia's international defender Nikola Jerkan. Forest also complete the signing of striker Dean Saunders from Galatasaray . . . Man United are reported ready to complete the £3.5m purchase of Karel Poborsky.
GERMANY: Denmark striker Mikkel Beck prepares to quit Fortuna Koln to begin pre-season training with Middlesbrough.
ITALY: League president Luciano Nizzola is supported by the clubs of Serie A and B to stand against Antonio Matarrese, when the federation president comes up for re-election.
PORTUGAL: Libson police say they have arrested a suspect in connection with the death of a soccer fan who was killed by a rocket flare at the Cup Final in May.
REP IRELAND: The government approves a bilateral agreement with Britain aimed at preventing convicted hooligans travelling abroad.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA denies reports it is considering scrapping the use of the golden goal or sudden-death finish in extra time . . . European champions Juventus and UEFA Cup winners Bayern Munich are contracted to meet on July 28 at the 100th anniversary tournament of FC Zurich, along with FC Zurich and champions Grasshopper.
UNITED STATES: Alexi Lalas of New England Revolution is suspended for one game and fined after being sent off for time-wasting in a 1-0 win over Los Angeles Galaxy.

TUESDAY, JULY 9

ACTION: Thailand reach the finals of the Asian Cup by drawing 2-2 away to Singapore. Burma beat Maldives 4-1.
BULGARIA: The federation dismisses national coach Dimitar Penev and fine his nephew Luboslav Penev the equivalent of his £10,000 qualifying bonus because of his outspoken comments on returning to Sofia. Hristo Bonev is favourite to take over.
ENGLAND: Liverpool consider an offer for Croat full-back Robert Jarni if they fail in a bid for Patrik Berger.
FRANCE: The Supreme Court upholds a bankruptcy order against Bernard Tapie, the former Marseille president. This clears the way for action to remove him as a Member of the French and European parliaments.
HOLLAND: PSV Eindhoven are reported to be ready, reluctantly, to sell Brazilian striker Ronaldo to Barcelona or Internazionale for £13.5m.
SPAIN: The league and federation agree that clubs will be able to include six non-European Union players in their squads this coming season. Clubs can also increase squad sizes from 22 to 25 players . . . La Coruna sign Palmeiras' Brazilian Olympic squad star Rivaldo . . . Betis buy Ajax Amsterdam's Nigerian striker Finidi George for £5m.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10

ACTION: Brazil beat Denmark 5-1 in Florianopolis in an Olympic warm-up.
BRAZIL: Ronaldo learns he will become the most expensive player in Brazilian history if Barcelona or Inter succeed with their $20m bid . . . Corinthians buy Paraguay defender Juan Carlos Villamayor Medina.
ENGLAND: Newcastle's French winger David Ginola talks over a £4m transfer to Barcelona.
ITALY: The demolition of Juventus goes on as Portuguese midfield star Paulo Sousa is sold to Borussia Dortmund . . . Torino complete the £1.7m sale of Ruggiero Rizzitelli to Bayern Munich . . . Fiorentina's Gabriel Batistuta is a reported target for Middlesbrough.
UNITED STATES: Los Angeles Galaxy goalkeeper Jorge Campos is called up as an over-age player by Mexico for the Olympics.

THURSDAY, JULY 11

ARGENTINA: Diego Maradona says he would be happy to play for Argentina again – if national coach Daniel Passarella asked him.
CHINA: Officials in Beijing say – unlike in Japan – Boca Juniors will be welcomed with Diego Maradona for friendly matches in Beijing and Chengdu.
ENGLAND: Sheffield United sign Belarus international Peter Kachuro from Dinamo Minsk . . . Southampton vice-chairman Keith Wiseman is voted in by the FA Council as chairman in succession to Sir Bert Millichip.
ITALY: Milan striker Marco Simone suffers minor head injuries when his Porsche collides with a lorry near Modena . . . veteran German defender Dietmar Beiersdorfer quits Koln to join Reggiana . . . Lazio sign Pavel Neved from Sparta Prague for £4m even though PSV Eindhoven are threatening a protest to FIFA because he had signed a pre-contract with them.
RUSSIA: Oleg Romantsev resigns as national coach, to be replaced by assistant Boris Ignatyev.
SPAIN: Barcelona directors fly to Holland to complete the signing of Ronaldo from PSV Eindhoven. Ronaldo has agreed a six-year contract at £1.6m a season.
PORTUGAL: Euro 96 coach Antonio Oliveira replaces Bobby Robson at FC Porto.
UNITED STATES: Argentine players and officials adjust to unusual Olympic training quarters alongside the black-robed monks of the St Bernard Abbey at Cullman, Alabama.
WALES: Welsh FA president Brian Fear says his officials will contact the FA in London to discuss the prospect of joining England in a bid to host the 2006 World Cupo.

Sent off . . . Alexi Lalas

FRIDAY, JULY 12

BELGIUM: The European Commission investigates claims by Danish striker Mikkel Beck of an unfair restraint of trade attempt by the German federation to prevent him leaving Fortuna Koln to join Middlesbrough.
BRAZIL: Romario's on-off return to Spain is on again as Flamengo prepare to agree terms with Valencia president Paco Roig.
ENGLAND: Sheffield United complete the signing of Piotr Kachuro from Dinamo Minsk for £650,000 . . . Aston Villa sign Portugal full-back Fernando Nelson for £1.75m . . . Oldham defender Chris Makin starts a trial with Marseille . . . Premier League clubs report massive increase in season ticket sales . . . the *Daily Mail* claims that policing costs may have made the difference between Euro 96 showing a profit or loss.
FINLAND: Referees at the Helsinki Cup youth tournament report a positive response to the use of a green card to reward positive play.
ITALY: Bologna sign Russian striker Igor Kolivanov from Foggia and Sweden striker Kennet Andersson from relegated Bari.
LIBYA: Between 20 and 50 people are reported killed or injured after a riot at the league match between At-Ittihad and Al-Ahli, who are controlled by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi's son, Al-Saadi.
SPAIN: Barcelona confirm they hope to match up PSV's Ronaldo and Parma's returning Hristo Stoichkov for the new season.
SWITZERLAND: The federation decides to retain Artur Jorge as national coach.

SATURDAY, JULY 13

ENGLAND: Fernando Nelson, Aston Villa's Portuguese signing, says he hopes to use the transfer to prove Antonio Oliveira was wrong to exclude him from the squad for Euro 96.
UNITED STATES: MLS commissioner Doug Logan, on the eve of the mid-season all-star double-header, says he has been "very happy with the first half of the MLS season". MLS has averaged 20,505 fans per game.

SUNDAY, JULY 14

ACTION: Brazil beat the FIFA All-Stars 2-1 in New Jersey.
BRAZIL: Flamengo and Valencia say they are close to an agreement on the resale of Romario.
CZECH REPUBLIC: Manchester United are expected to complete the £3.5m signing of Karel Poborsky within the next two days.
LIBYA: Libyan television broadcasts in black and white as a mark of mourning for victims of the soccer riot on Friday.
UNITED STATES: A late goal by Steve Pittman provides the East with a 3-2 win over the West in the first MLS All-Star game at Giants Stadium, New Jersey.

MONDAY, JULY 15

ENGLAND: Barnsley try to sign Croat Under-21 midfielder Govo Bosancic . . . Middlesbrough deny reports of problems delaying completion of the signing of Fabrizio Ravanelli . . . Liverpool rejoin the transfer race for Czech forward Karel Poborsky.
GERMANY: Bayern Munich's Lothar Matthaus and Jurgen Klinsmann say they have ended their feud after a "peace summit" in New York before in the MLS All-Star match.
LIBYA: State television announces that eight people died and 39 were injured in fighting

Dortmund buy . . . Paulo Sousa

that broke out at last Tuesday's game between Al-Ittihad and Al-Ahli. Justice Minister Mohammed Mahmoud Hijazi launches an inquiry.
SPAIN: Valencia confirm that Romario will return to Spain to play for them.
SWITZERLAND: Six Euro 96 referees are nominated for the Champions League qualifying round: England's Paul Durkin, Mario Van der Ende (Hol), Ahmet Cakar (Tur), Kim Milton Nielsen (Den), Anders Frisk (Swe) and Serge Muhmenthaler (Swz).
UNITED STATES: The US will start their World Cup qualifying campaign on November 3 against Guatemala, two weeks after the MLS finale.

TUESDAY, JULY 16

GERMANY: Dutch central defender Johan de Kock quits Roda to sign for Schalke.
SWEDEN: League leaders IFK Gothenburg agree to sell Hakan Mild to Real Sociedad after IFK have completed their qualifying round matches in the Champions League.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

ACTION: Europe's club competitions make a record early start with first leg ties in the preliminary round of the UEFA Cup.
ENGLAND: Blackburn put a smile on the face of English football by offering Manchester United – repeatedly linked with Alan Shearer – £4m for Eric Cantona . . . Aston Villa chairman Doug Ellis forecasts that Sky Sports will show 10 live games each week on pay per view from the start of the 1997-98 season and that viewers will be charged up to £14 for some matches.
SWITZERLAND: Padova's Croat striker Goran Vlaovic is suspended indefinitely by FIFA after signing transfer intents with Napoli, Espanyol and Valencia.

THURSDAY, JULY 18

CZECH REP: Slavia say a decision on Karel Poborsky will be made by the end of the week.
ENGLAND: Norway's veteran goalkeeper Erik Thorsvedt, given a free transfer by Tottenham, joins Wolves.

OBITUARIES

CESARE CEVENINI . . . the fourth of five brothers (Aldo, Mario, Luigi, Cesare and Carlo), has died in Italy aged 97. All five played together at one time for Internazionale. Cesare as outside left. His promising career was upset by foot injuries suffered while serving at Caporetto in World War One. After the war he played five years with Inter, before ending his career with Arsenale of La Spezia.

CLEMENTE FERNANDEZ . . . former Spanish international right-back, has died aged 72. He played the bulk of his career with Real Madrid between 1942 and 1951 and played nine times for Spain.

FRANTISEK PLANICKA . . . considered the greatest goalkeeper of the 1930s, has died in Prague aged 92. Planicka, who was never booked or sent off, was awarded Unesco's Fair Play prize in 1994. He played as a teenager for Slovan Prague and Bubenec but will be forever linked with Slavia Prague. In the 1930s Planicka was an outstanding and courageous player in the World Cups of both 1934 – when he captained Czechoslovakia in their 2-1 extra-time defeat by Italy in the Final – and 1938, when he played the last half of the quarter-final against Brazil with a broken arm. He was a league champion nine times with Slavia, won the cup six times and the Mitropa Cup – in 1938. Planicka played 74 times for his country.

HERIBERTO HERRERA . . . former Paraguayan international and top coach, has died in his native Asuncion, aged 70. Herrera, known as HH2 in the 1960s to distinguish him from Helenio Herrera, was born on April 24, 1926 and played centre half in the Paraguayan team which won the South American Cup in 1953. He moved to Europe and played six years with Atletico Madrid before injury halted his career at 30. Herrera turned to coaching in Spain with Rayo Vallecano, Tenerife, Granada, Espanol and Hercules Alicante. His work attracted the attention of Juventus who hired him in 1964 to bring a more positive, attacking style and approach to Italian football. His ideas were rewarded with a league championship in 1967 and Italian Cup in 1965. Inter signed Herrera in 1969 only to sack him six matches into the 1970-71 championship. Later he coached Sampdoria and Atalanta before returning to Spain with Elche and Las Palmas.

JOCK WALLACE . . . the manager of Rangers who helped to end Celtic's domination of Scottish football, has died at the age of 60. Wallace kept goal for West Bromwich for several years and was player-manager of Berwick when they caused the biggest shock in Scottish Cup history, in 1967, beating a Rangers side who reached the Cup-winners Cup Final later that season. He was coaching the club when they won the that trophy in 1972, then succeeded Willie Waddell as manager and helped them to win the League-League Cup -Scottish Cup treble in 1976 and 1978. Wallace, renowned for his military-style training methods, later managed Leicester and Motherwell before having a second and less successful spell at Ibrox.

Diary JULY 1996

PORTUGAL: Porto president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa admits that even the biggest Portuguese clubs can no longer compete in the international transfer market against the top clubs from Italy, Spain and England.
REP IRELAND: Another shock for Irish football as Donie Butler, commercial manager of the FAI for 10 years, resigns.
SPAIN: Chilean striker Marcelo Salas joins Las Palmas for £2m.
SWITZERLAND: Dutch referee Dick Jol is reinstated by FIFA after being cleared of allegations that he placed bets on matches on which he officiated.
UNITED STATES: Olympic football organisers report that almost all the available 2.4million tickets for the tournament's 32 matches have been sold.

FRIDAY, JULY 19

ACTION: Syria beat Qatar 3-1 in an Asian Cup qualifier and reach the final despite having two players sent off.
ARGENTINA: UEFA Cup finalists Bordeaux agree a £1m fee for Argentina striker Claudio Biaggio of San Lorenzo.
FRANCE: The league signs a five-year marketing contract with a subsidiary of the Walt Disney corporation worth £2.2m.
GERMANY: Relegated Kaiserslautern spring a major surprise by signing Otto Rehhagel, sacked by Bayern Munich last season.
SCOTLAND: Rangers manager Walter Smith says he is more concerned about on-field problems, rather than off-field ones, when they play Alania Vladikavkaz in the preliminary round of the Champions League.
SPAIN: Slavia Prague midfielder Radek Bejbl signs a four-year contract with Atletico Madrid for £1.6m. Bejbl says he turned down four other clubs, including Coventry.
SWITZERLAND: UEFA announces payment increases for Champions League participants. The two finalists will each receive £2.1m (a 14per cent increase). Semi-finalists will each receive an increased £1.6m but the base rate for competing in the groups remains £800,000. The cash fall-out for UEFA's 50 member federations will be £100,000 each.
UNITED STATES: Olympics – Brazil manager Mario Zagallo names Bebeto and Savio as his strikers for the first match, against Japan, despite Ronaldo's return to fitness.

SATURDAY, JULY .. 20

ACTION: The Olympic Games soccer tournament opens with the United States crashing 3-1 to Argentina in Birmingham, Alabama.
ENGLAND: Manchester United finally win their battle to sign Karel Poborsky for £3.5m.
ITALY: Sampdoria buy 21-year-old Sebastian Veron from Boca Juniors for £4.5m . . . Stefano Tanzi, 27-year-old son of the owner of Parma, is appointed president . . . Oliver Bierhoff decides to stay with Udinese until the year 2000 rather than transfer to Juventus or Parma . . . Gabriel Batistuta says he intends to retire at the age of 30 – in three years' time.

SUNDAY, JULY 21

ACTION: Two shocks at the Olympics. Japan beat Brazil and Mexico defeat Italy, both 1-0.

MONDAY, JULY 22

BRAZIL: Newspapers describe the Olympic defeat by Japan as "one of the greatest upsets of the century".
CHILE: Forward Marcelo Salas blames his club, Universidad de Chile, for the collapse of his £2m transfer to Spanish club Las Palmas.
CHINA: A capacity 40,000 is already certain for Saturday's forthcoming friendly in which Sichuan Quanxing face Diego Maradona's touring Boca Juniors.
ENGLAND: Fabrizio Ravanelli meets the Middlesbrough fans and predicts European honours for his new club.
FRANCE: Marseille strengthen their squad by signing Germany's Euro 96 goalkeeper Andreas Kopke from Eintracht Frankfurt.
HOLLAND: Finland international Jari Litmanen extends his contract with Ajax Amsterdam for another two seasons.
SPAIN: Hristo Stoichkov accuses Bulgaria's top officials of letting down the players and criticises the dismissal as national coach of Dimitar Penev and the disciplining of fellow forward Lubo Penev.
UNITED STATES: US forward Jovan Kirovski says he hopes Olympic success will help Manchester United's bid to resolve his work permit problems in England.

TUESDAY, JULY ... 23

ACTION: Barry Town beat Latvia's Dinaburg in the UEFA Cup preliminary round.
ENGLAND: Manchester United bid to sign Barcelona's Jordi . . . Tottenham buy Denmark midfielder Allan Nielsen from Brondby . . . Coventry pay £3m for Leeds and Scotland captain Gary McAllister . . . Sheffield Wednesday agree to pay £4m for Juventus' Attilio Lombardo.
ITALY: Internazionale say they have reached agreement in principle with Ajax to buy Nigerian striker Nwankwo Kanu.
SWITZERLAND: FIFA suspends Slovenia international Ermin Siljak indefinitely because he has signed for both French club Bastia and Italy's Reggiana.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

ACTION: ACTION: The second legs of the UEFA Cup preliminary round are completed.
ENGLAND: New England coach Glenn Hoddle appoints former international winger Peter Taylor as the first full-time manager of the under-21s.
SCOTLAND: Celtic chairman Fergus McCann says Monaco should pay a transfer fee for John Collins because Monte Carlo is not a formal member of the European Union.
SPAIN: Jordi Cruyff negotiates his departure from Barcelona to join Manchester United.

Transfer saga . . . Karel Poborsky

TURKEY: Besiktas renew their interest in Nigerian forward Daniel Amokachi.
UNITED STATES: New England bring Joe-Max Moore home from Germany to MLS.

THURSDAY, JULY .. 25

ACTION: ACTION: At the Olympics, Brazil secure a quarter-final place by defeating Nigeria 1-0; Italy end their disastrous campaign with the poor consolation of a 2-1 win over South Korea.
CHILE: Police report having arrested 96 fans before, during and after the Santiago derby in which Colo Colo lost 1-0 to Universidad de Chile.
ENGLAND: Jovan Kirovski, one of the stars of the US Olympic team, says he has been told by Alex Ferguson that he has lost his appeal against a work permit refusal to play in England for Manchester United . . . Leeds pip Everton to pay a British record £2.25m for a goalkeeper for Crystal Palace's Nigel Martyn . . . Belgium international Philippe Albert extends his contract at Newcastle to 2000.
FRANCE: Furious Monaco reject Celtic claims that they owe a transfer fee for Scotland midfielder John Collins because, even though he moved under the Bosman rules, Monte Carlo is not a member of the European Union ... Brazilian centre-back Paulo Sergio Gralac becomes Bordeaux's 12th summer signing when he joins from Curitiba.
SPAIN: Jordi Cruyff reaches a compromise with Barcelona which will allow him to sign for Manchester United.

FRIDAY, JULY 26

ACTION:
SWITZERLAND: Arsenal vice-chairman David Dein is appointed to UEFA's clubs competitions committee in succession to new FA chairman Keith Wiseman, who now sits on UEFA's juridicial committee ... the draw for the UEFA Cup second preliminary round is: Kosice (Ska) v Celtic, Legia v Haka, Rapid Bucharest v Lok Sofia, Sliema v Odense, Heraklis v Apoel, Zagreb v Spartak Moscow, Partizan Belgrade v National Bucharest, Tbilisi Dinamo v Molde, Lyngby v Mura (Sna), Halmstads v Vardar (Mac), Moscow Dynamo v Jazz, Zalgiris Vilnius v Aberdeen, Vasutas (Hun) v Barry (Wal), Helsingborgs (Swe) v Dynamo-93 Minsk (Bls), Hajduk Split v Moscow Torpedo, Aarau v Lantana (Est), Dynamo Minsk (Bls) v Besiktas, HJK Helsinki v Chernomorets Odessa, Casino Graz v Vojvodina, Neuchatel v Anorthosis, Sigma Olomouc (Cz) v Hutnik Krakow, Akranes v CSKA Moscow, Tirol Innsbruck v Slavia Sofia, Slovan Bratislava v Trabzonspor, Skonto (Lat) v Malmo, Beitar Jerusalem v Bodo-Glimt (Nor). Matches to be played on August 6 and 20.

SATURDAY, JULY .. 27

ACTION: Portugal beat France 2-1 and Argentina thrash holders Spain 4-0 in the Olympic Games quarter-finals ... England beat the Irish Republic 1-0 in the UEFA under-18 finals but reach only the third place play-off against Belgium. Spain qualify to play France in the final.
CHINA: Manchester City cut short their 10-day pre-season tour of China after flood problems.
FRANCE: Parma captain Lorenzo Minotti signs a four-year deal with Marseille.

SUNDAY, JULY 28

ACTION: Brazil and Nigeria complete the Olympic Games semi-finals line-up.
ENGLAND: Borussia Monchengladbach beat FC Porto 3-2 in the final of the Moores Trophy in Liverpool. Everton and Liverpool draw 0-0 in the third place play-off . . . Sunderland forward Phil Gray joins French club Nancy on a free transfer.

MONDAY, JULY 29

CZECH REP: Slavia say that Karel Poborsky really will sign for Manchester United tomorrow.
ENGLAND: England striker Alan Shearer joins home-town Newcastle from Blackburn Rovers in a world-record £15m transfer . . . Nottingham Forest complete the signing of Nikola Jerkan for £1m from Oviedo.
HOLLAND: Cup-holders PSV Eindhoven replace Barcelona-bound Ronaldo with another Brazilian striker in 23-year-old Marcelo Silva Ramos, from Cruzeiro.
SOUTH AFRICA: Trevor Phillips, former commercial director of the Football Association, prepares to start work in his new post as chief executive of the new South African Premier League.
SWITZERLAND: Juventus lose 2-1 to FC Zurich in the final of the Swiss club's centenary tournament. Bayern Munich beat Grasshopper 3-2 for third place.

TUESDAY, JULY ... 30

ACTION: Hosts France beat Spain 1-0 to win the European Under-18 Championship. England finish third by defeating Belgium 3-2 by golden goal in Besancon.
BULGARIA: Hristo Bonev is officially apointed as the national team's new coach in place of Dimitar Penev.
CZECH REP: Karel Poborsky finally completes his drawn-out transfer to Manchester United by signing his new contract at a Prague hotel witnessed by United director Maurice Watkins, Slavia general director Vladimir Leska, and Slavia chairman Miroslav Ondricek.
ENGLAND: Alan Shearer flies to Singapore to link up with his new Newcastle team-mates on their Far East tour.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

ACTION: Nigeria shock Brazil, beating the Olympic favourites 4-3 on the golden goal rule in the Games semi-final . . . Belarus and Lithuania draw 2-2 in a friendly in Minsk.
AZERBAIJAN: Neftchi Baku coach Asif Aliev is banned for two games and players Ayidin Alekberov for five matches and Rasim Abusev for four games by UEFA after being sent off in their UEFA Cup preliminary round.
GERMANY: Jean-Pierre Papin says he is leaving Bayern to return to France for Bordeaux.
ITALY: The League compiles only the first 10 matchdays of the new season in protest at government failure to help clubs with tax breaks . . . Inter beat Manchester Utd in a friendly.
PORTUGAL: Artur Jorge obtains his release as Switzerland manager to take over, for a second time, as coach of Portugal.
ROMNAIA: Steaua Bucharest sell Anton Dobos to AEK Athens.
SCOTLAND: Aberdeen line up the transfer of Bulgaria defender Tzanko Tzvetanov.
TURKEY: Gheorghe Hagi signs a three-year deal with Galatasaray.

JULY							
Week	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
29	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
31	29	30	31				

SUMMER TRANSFERS

*= to be confirmed
JORG ALBERTZ (M) - Hamburg - Rangers*
AMARAL (M) - Palmeiras - Parma
Emanuel AMUNIKE (F) - Sporting Lisbon - Barcelona
Kennet ANDERSSON (F) - Bari - Bologna
Jocelyn ANGLOMA (D) - Torino - Internazionale
Aljosa ASANOIC (M) - Hajduk Split - Derby Co
Tijjani BABANGIDA (F) - Roda JC Kerkrade - Ajax
Vitor BAIA (G) - FC Porto - Barcelona
Mario BASLER (M) - Werder Bremen - Bayern Munich
Radek BEJBL (M) - Slavia Prague - Atletico Madrid
Claudio BIAGGIO (F) - San Lorenzo - Bordeaux
Joachim BJORKLUND (D) - Vicenza - Rangers
Laurent BOKSI (F) - Lazio - Juventus
Lee BOWYER (F) - Charlton - Leeds
Daniel BRAVO (M) - Paris SG - Parma
Craig BREWSTER (D) - Dundee Utd - Ionikos (Gre)*
Steve BRUCE (D) - Man Utd - Birmingham
CAIO (F) - *Internazionale* - Napoli
Enrico CHIESA (F) - Sampdoria - Parma
Tony COTON (G) - Man United - Sunderland
Fernando COUTO (D) - Parma - Rangers*
Hernan CRESPO (F) - River Plate - Parma
Martin DAHLIN (F) - Borussia MG - AS Roma
Christian DAILLY (M) - Dundee Utd - Derby Co
Edgar DAVIDS (M) - Ajax - Milan
Marc DEGREYSE (F) - Shef Wed - PSV Eindhoven
Johan DE KOCK (D) - Roda JC - Schalke 04
Paolo DI CANIO (F) - Milan - Celtic
Roberto DI MATTEO (F) - Lazio - Chelsea
Youri DJORKAEFF (F)- Pari SG - Internazionale
Georgios DONIS (F) - Panathinaikos - Blackburn*
Georgi DONKOV (F) - CSKA Sofia - VfL Bochum
Chritophe DUGARRY (F) - Bordeaux - Milan
EMERSON (M) - FC Porto - Middlesbrough
Engibar ENGIBAROV (D) - CSKA Sofia - VfL Bochum
Juan ESNAIDER (F) - Real Madrid - Ato Madrid*
Per FRANDSEN (M) - FC Copenhagen - Bolton
Jacob FRIIS-HANSEN (D) - Bordeaux - Hamburg
Paul FURLONG (F) - Chelsea - Birmingham
Paulo FUTRE (F) - Milan - West Ham
Finidi GEORGE (F) - Ajax - Real Betis
Giuseppe GIANNINI (M) - AS Roma - Sturm Graz
GIOVANNI (M) - Santos - Barcelona
Marco GRASSI (F) - Rennes - Monaco
Bruce GROBBELAAR (G) - Southampton - Zimbabwe (reserve coach)
Georges GRUN (D) - Anderlecht - Reggiana
Gheorghe HAGI (M) - Barcelona - Galatasaray
Richard HALL (D) - Southampton - West Ham
Michael HATZ (D) - Rapid Vienna - Reggiana
Carsten JANCKER (F) - Rapid Wien - Bayern Munich
Michael JOHANSEN (M) - FC Copenhagen - Bolton
Ronnie JOHNSEN (D) - Besiktas - Man Utd
Peter KACHURO (F) - Dinamo Minsk - Sheffield Utd
Andreas KOPKE (G) - Eintracht Frankfurt - Marseille
Emil KOSTADINOV (F) - FC Porto - Fenerbahce
Darko KOVACEVIC (F) - Shef Wed - Real Sociedad
Pierre LAIGLE (M) - Lens - Sampdoria
Jacob LAURSEN (D) - Silkeborg - Derby Co
Frank LEBOEUF (D) - Strasbourg - Chelsea
Yordan LECHKOV (M) - SV Hamburg - Marseille
Bixente LIZARAZU (D) - Bordeaux - Athletic Bilbao
Rob MAAS (M) - Feyenoord - Arminia Bielfeld (Ger)
Mickael MADAR (F) - Monaco - La Coruna
Corentin MARTIN (F) - Auxerre - La Coruna
Rab McKINNON (D) - Motherwell - Twente Enschede
MICHEL (M) - Real Madrid - Atletico Celaya (Mex)
Hakan MILD (M) - IFK Gothenburg - Real Sociedad
Paulo MONTERO (D) - Atalanta - Juventus
Nourredine NAYBET (F) - Sporting Lisbon - La Coruna
Pavel NEVED (M) - Sparta Prague - Lazio
Fernando NELSON (D) - Sporting Lisbon - Aston Villa
Luis OLIVEIRA (F) - Cagliari - FiorentinaMarco
PASCOLO (G) - Grasshopper - Cagliari
Reynald PEDROS (F) - Nantes - Marseille
Zeljko PETKOVIC (M) - RKC Waalwijk - PSV Eindhoven
Bobby PETTA (M) - Feyenoord - Ipswich
Igor PROTTI (F) - Bari - Lazio
Florin RADUCIOIU (F) - Espanyol - West Ham
Fabrizio RAVANELLI (F) - Juventus - Middesbrough
Michael REIZIGER (D) - Ajax - Milan
Ruggiero RIZZITELLI (F) - Torino - Bayern Munich
RIVALDO (M) - Palmeiras - La Coruna
ROBERTO CARLOS (D)- Internazionale - Real Madrid
ROMARIO (F) - Flamengo - Valencia
RONALDO (F) -PSV Eindhoven - Barcelona
Ian RUSH (F) - Liverpool - Leeds Utd
Dean SAUNDERS (F)- Galatasaray - Nottm Forest
Carlos SECRETARIO - FC Porto - Real Madrid
Clarence SEEDORF (M) - Sampdoria - Real Madrid
Tibor SELYMES (D) - Cercle Bruges - Anderlecht
Rene SCHNEIDER (D) - Hansa Rostock - Dortmund
Sonny SILOOY (D) - Ajax - Arminia Bielfeld (Ger)
Theo SNELDERS (G) - Aberdeen - Rangers
Ole Gunnar SOLSKJAR (F) - Molde - Man Utd
Paulo SOUSA (M) - Juventus - Dortmund
Gary SPEED (M) - Leeds Utd - Everton
Alan STUBBS (D) - Bolton - Celtic
Ben THATCHER (D) - Millwall - Wimbledon
Lilian THURAM (D) - Monaco - Parma
Adolfo VALENCIA (F) - Independiente (Col) - Reggiana
Ramon VEGA (D) - Grasshopper Zurich - Cagliari
John VELDMAN (D) - Sparta Rotterdam - Ajax
Gianluca VIALLI (F) - Juventus - Chelsea
Juan VILLAMAYOR (D) - Cerro Porteno (Par) - Corinthians (Bra)
Johnny VILSTRUP (M) - Luton Town - AGF Aarhus
Aron WINTER (F) - Lazio - Internazionale
Richard WITSCHGE (M) - Bordeaux - Ajax
Pierre WOME (M) - Canon Yaounde (Cam) - Vicenza
Chris WOODS (G) - Sheffield Wed - Colorado Rapids (MLS)
Ivan ZAMORANO (F) - Real Madrid - Internazionale
Zinedine ZIDANE (F) - Bordeaux - Juventus

MANAGERS ON THE MOVE
Nelson ACOSTA - Union Espanola - Chile
Eduardo AMORIM - Corinthians (Bra) - out of contract
Carlo ANCELOTTI - Reggiana - Parma
Xavier AZKARGORTA - Chile - out of contract
Carlos BIANCHI - Velez Sarsfield- AS Roma
Fabio CAPELLO - Milan - Real Madrid
Roland COURBIS - Toulouse - Bordeaux
Johan CRUYFF - Barcelona - out of contract
Christoph DAUM - Besiktas - Bayer Leverkusen
Ali FERGANI - Algeria - out of contract (suspended)
Luis FERNANDEZ - Paris SG - Athletic Bilbao
Eddie FIRMANI - NY/NJ MetroStars - out of contract
Trevor FRANCIS - out of contract - Birmingham
Boris IGNATYEV - Russia (assistant) - Russia
Artur JORGE - Switzerland - FC Porto*
Sebastiao LAZARONI - out of contract - Fenerbahce
Carlo MAZZONE - AS Roma - out of contract
Gary MEGSON - Norwich City - out of contract
Dave MERRINGTON - Southampton - out of contract
Gordon MILNE - out of contract - Bursaspor
Antonio OLIVEIRA - Portugal - FC Porto
Carlos Alberto PARREIRA - Fenerbahce - out of contract
Dimitar PENEV - Bulgaria - out of contract
Antoni PIECHNICZEK - out of contract - Poland
Sepp PIONTEK - AaB Aalborg - out of contract
Carlos QUEIROZ - out of contract - NY/NJ MetroStars
Otto REHHAGEL - out of contract - Kaiserslautern
Erich RIBBECK - Bayer Leverkusen - out of contract
Bobby ROBSON - FC Porto - Barcelona
Gernot ROHR - Bordeaux - out of contract
Oleg ROMANTSEV - Russia - out of contract
Graeme SOUNESS - Galatasaray - Southampton
Wladyslaw STACHURSKI - Poland - out of contract
Oscar Washington TABAREZ - out of contract - Milan
Mike WALKER - out of contract - Norwich City
Robert WASEIGE - Standard Liege - Sporting Lisbon

Crossword

WIN A GOALKEEPER SHIRT SIGNED BY WALTER ZENGA!

The good people at Uhlsport, Europe's leading specialist sportswear company, have kindly donated a shirt autographed by former Italy goalkeeper Walter Zenga. The first correct entry selected at random after Sept 1, will win the shirt. Five runners-up will each win an exclusive *WORLD SOCCER* sweatshirt.

uhlsport FEEL THE PASSION

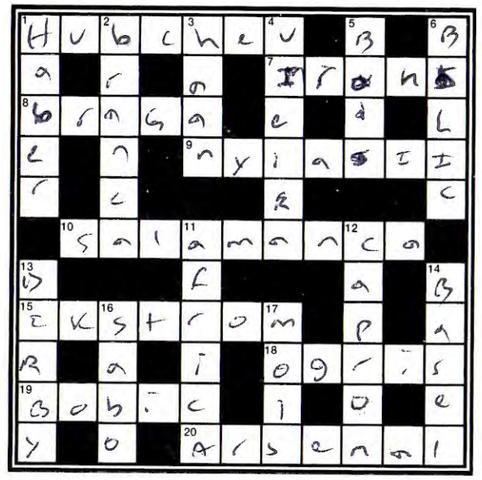
SEND YOUR ENTRY TO:
***WORLD SOCCER* CROSSWORD (SEPTEMBER)**
***WORLD SOCCER*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford St, London SE1 9LS.**

CLUES ACROSS
1 .....Bulgarian defender with Lechkov at Hamburg last season (7)
7 .....Japan's most-capped player and Asia's Footballer of the Year (5)
8 .....1992 Portuguese Cup winners from the Primeiro de Maio Stadium (5)
9 .....Ferencvaros coach, 1994-95 (7)
10 .....Bottom club relegated from Spain's top division last season (9)
15 .....Swedish forward whose clubs include Reggiana and Eintracht Frankfurt (7)
18 .....Andreas, FK and Austria striker with Espanyol in 1991 (5)
19 .....Stuttgart striker in Germany's Euro 96 squad (5)
20 .....Club side of Holland's Bergkamp (7)

CLUES DOWN
1 .....Midfielder transferred from Kaiserslautern to Stuttgart in 95 (5)
2 .....Ex-Udinese and Roma Forward at Inter last season (6)
3 .....Van Hanegem's successor at Feyenoord (4)
4 .....Milan's former Cannes midfield man, Patrick (6)
5 .....Portugal's last line of defence (4)
6 .....Croatian defender currently contracted to West Ham (5)
11 .....Continent which Havelange promised would stage the 2006 World Cup (6)
12 .....Nantes central defender, Eddy (6)
13 .....The Rams, newly promoted to England's Premier League (5)
14 .....Switzerland's St Jakob Stadium club (5)
16 .....Coach chosen to juggle responsibilities for Dynamo Kiev and Ukraine (4)
17 .....Striker of FC Twente and Holland (4)

AUGUST SOLUTION
ACROSS: 2. Andersson 6. Spain,7. Donis 9. Ouedec 10. Rudi 12. Geli 14. Chendo 17. Eilts 18. Ramos 19. Deschamps
DOWN: 1. Gascoigne 2. Asare 3. Dundee 4. Roda 5. Sanou 8. Sliwowski 11. Thuram 13. Lalas 15. Nimes 16. Esch

AUGUST CROSSWORD WINNERS
Huw Roberts, Caernarfon, Gwynedd; Del Daley, Hackney, London; Edwin Roberts-Morehen, Radcliffe, Manchester; John Hostler, Bromley, Kent; Marcus Voci, Dorking, Surrey.



NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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_____

POSTCODE _____

SEPT

WORLD SERVICE

AUSTRIA

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JULY 28

WEEKEND

SALZBURG 1 (Hutter 69)
NIEDEROSTEREICH 0 Att: 8,000

AUSTRIA WIEN 3 (Flogel 37, Rachimov 43, 80)
STURM GRAZ 2 (Vastic 65, Hiden 91)
Att: 5,000

GRAZER AK 1 (Sabitzer 21)
RAPID WIEN 1 (Penska 6) Att: 9,000

LINZER ASK 0
SV REID 0 Att: 9,000

FC TIROL 2 (Baur 34, Kitzbithler 88)
LINZ 0 Att: 7,000

SWITZERLAND

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JULY 14

MIDWEEK

AARAU 0
BASEL 1 (La Placa 58) Att: 7,900

LAUSANNE 3 (Ohrel 55, Sane 556, 77)
YOUNG BOYS 2 (Eich 72, Streun 81) Att: 5,100

LUGANO 0
ST GALLEN 0 Att: 5,500

NEUCHATEL XAMAX 2 (Lesniak 41, Sandjak 82)
SERVETTE 1 (Ippoliti 44) Att: 8,800

SION 1 (Lukic pen 37)
LUCERNE 1 (Sermeter 2) Att: 6,200

WEEKEND

GRASSHOPPER 0
FC ZURICH 1 (Studer 83) Att: 12,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JULY 21

MIDWEEK

BASEL 0
NEUCHATEL XAMAX 1 (Pana 88) Att: 16,000

LUCERNE 2 (Van Eck 24, Sawu 46)
LAUSANNE 2 (Udovic 14, Rehn 51) Att: 10,480

ST GALLEN 2 (Allenspach 46, Zwyssig 56)
SION 1 (Vercruysse 47) Att: 7,000

SERVETTE 2 (Ippoliti 11, Biaggi 20)
GRASSHOPPER 2 (Turkyilmaz 32, 44)
Att: 7,000

YOUNG BOYS 1 (Okolosi 24)
LUGANO 0 Att: 5,500

FC ZURICH 1 (Nonda pen 45)
AARAU 1 (Wiederkehr pen 61) Att: 7,600

WEEKEND

GRASSHOPPER 2 (Turkyilmaz 50, Gren pen 88)
LAUSANNE 1 (Rehn 56) Att: 3,650

NEUCHATEL XAMAX 1 (Isabella 11)
LUGANO 0 Att: 7,900

ST GALLEN 2 (Allenspach pen 30, Nyathi 87)
YOUNG BOYS 1 (Lengen 88) Att: 6,800

SERVETTE 0
FC ZURICH 0 Att: 3,800

SION 1 (Vercruysse 31)
AARAU 0 Att: 9,000

WEEK ENDING SUNDAY, JULY 28

AARAU 0
GRASSHOPPER 1 (Moldovan 65) Att: 5,500

LAUSANNE 1 (Rehn 11)
SERVETTE 2 (Pouget 53, Marguerat 79)
Att: 8,000

LUGANO 1 (Karic 31)
SION 1 (Lukic 27) Att: 4,200

LUCERNE 2 (Sawu 50, 57)
NEUCHATEL XAMAX 2 (Wittl 3, Lesniak 32)
Att: 8,280

YOUNG BOYS 2 (Oklosi 28, Gerber 85)
BASEL 2 (Narko 41, Frick 64) Att: 8,000

FC ZURICH 0
ST GALLEN 0 Att: 8,400

INTERNATIONALS

THURSDAY, JUNE 20

Jun 20 - San Miguel de Tucuman - intl friendly
ARGENTINA 2 (Balbo 73, Simeone 77)
POLAND 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,000. **Ref:** H Elizondo (Arg).
Argentina: Bossio - Zanetti, Ayala, Sensini, Chamot (Pineda 81), Simeone, Veron (Bassedas 81), Morales, G Lopez, Delgado (Balbo 46), C Lopez.
Poland: Dudek - Zewlakov, Krzetowski, Skrzypek, Kaczmarczyk, Bak, Nowak, Berensztajn (Karwan 65), Dubiki, Piekarski (Jackiewicz 79), Zamilski.

Jun 20 - Lima - intl friendly
PERU 4 (Zegarra 24, Farfan 56, Palaxios 57, Solano 88 pen)
ARMENIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000
Peru: Miranda - Barco, Reynoso, Marengo, Reyna, Legario, Carranza, Solano, Zegarra, Gonzalez (Farfan), Palacios.
Armenia: Abrahamyan - Hovsepyan, Khachatryan, Mkhitaryan, Krbashyan, Mkrtchyan, Minasyan, Fonoyan, Petrosyan, A Avestisyan, V Avestisyan.

FRIDAY, JUNE 21

Jun 21 - Damascus - Asian Cup qual
SYRIA 2 (Loai Taleb 21, Ali Dib 34)
KAZAKHSTAN 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000

SATURDAY, JUNE 22

Jun 22 - San Pedro Sula - intl friendly
HONDURAS 1 (Martinez 92)
VENEZUELA 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000
Honduras: Flores - Pineda, Beata, Castro, Fu, N Zuniga (J Martinez), Smith, Guevara (Renean), Pabon (V Zuniga), Santamaria, Bermudez.
Venezuela: Golindano* - McIntosh, Garcia, F Hernandez, S Hernandez, Vallenilla (Filosa), Valiente (L Gonzalez), Tortolero, Vera, S Rivas (Urdaneta), Miranda (Chirinos).
* = *Golindano sent off 90mins.*

SUNDAY, JUNE 23

Jun 23 - Bridgetown - WC CONCACAF qual
BARBADOS 0
JAMAICA 1 (Boyd 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000

Jun 23 - Basseterre - WC CONCACAF qual
ST KITTS & NEVIS 2 (Gumbs 37, Bedford 89)
ST VINCENT & GRENADINES 2 (Hinds 9, Velox 35)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 2,000

Jun 23 - Port of Spain - WC CONCACAF qual
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO 8 (John 1, 24, 78, Yorke 8, Marcelle 14, Rougier 19, Eve 42, Latapy 89)
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 5,000
Trinidad & Tobago won 12-1 on agg

Jun 23 - Accra - WC African qual
LIBERIA 4 (Clarke 25, Weah 79, Makor 87, Debbah 90)
GAMBIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000
Liberia won 5-2 on agg

TUESDAY, JUNE 25

Jun 25 - Asuncion - intl friendly
PARAGUAY 1 (Esteche 45)
ARMENIA 2 (Varazdat 33, Esayan 56)
HT: 1-1.
Paraguay: Aceval - Sarabia, Gamarra, Suarez, Esteche (Espinola), Enciso, Bourdier, Vidal Sanabria, Meza (Torales), Rojas, Campos (Gomez).
Armenia: Harytuin - H Petrossian (Arsan), Haramayis, Vardan, Sarjis, Varazdat (Harail), Vardanian (Yervant), Avrahanian, A Petrossian (Mikhitarian), Hamlet, Esayan.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

Jun 27 - Vitoria, Brazil - intl friendly
BRAZIL 3 (Bebeto 34, 85, Narcisio 68)
POLAND 1 (Dubicki 16)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 36 700. **Ref:** J Aranda (Spa).
Brazil: Danrlei (Dida) - Ze Maria (Ze Elias), Aldair, Ronaldo (Narcisio), Roberto Carlos, Amaral, Flavio Conceicao, Rivaldo, Bebeto, Ronaldinho (Marques/Luizao), Juninho.
Poland: Dudek - Krzetowski, Nowak, Skrzypek, Wijnecki, Zewlabor, Karsmarski (Bak), Karwan (Maiezscki), Malinowscki (Krzyzanowski), Dubicki, Prekarsi.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30

Jun 30 - Portoviejo - intl friendly
ECUADOR 3 (Gilson de Souza 23, A Fernandez 46, Gavica 76)
ARMENIA 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12 000. **Ref:** R Zambrano (Ecu).
Ecuador: Morales (Espinosa) - Coronel, B Tenorio (Matamba), Capurro, Montano, Obregon, Gonzalez, Gilson de Souza, Gavica, A Fernandez, Uquillas (Sanchez).
Armenia: Abranamyan - Terprecian, Kahachatryan, Houseryan, Tonoyan, Vardayan, Petrosyain, Hevetisyain, Mihitaryan, Minasyan, Yesain.

Jun 30 - Chaitien - WC CONCACAF qual
HAITI 1 (Chauvet 21)
CUBA 1 (Almando 80 pen)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000
Cuba won 7-2 on agg

Jun 30 - Kingston - WC CONCACAF qual
JAMAICA 2 (Whitmore 23, Boyd 71)
BARBADOS 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000
Jamaica won 3-0 on agg

Jun 30 - Kingstown - WC CONCACAF qual
ST VINCENT & GRENADINES 0
ST KITT'S & NEVIS 0
Att: 3,500
St Vincent won on away goals, 2-2 agg

MONDAY, JULY 1

Jul 1 - Bangkok - Asian Cup qual
THAILAND 1 (Abichad Thaveechalermdit 55)
SINGAPORE 1 (Lim Tong Hai 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000

Jul 1 - Bangkok - Asian Cup qual
BURMA 3 (Phan Toe Aung, Myo Hlaing Win, Kyaw Min)
MALDIVES 1 (Lirdham Saeed 76 pen)
Att: 5,000

SATURDAY, JULY 6

Jul 6 - Santiago - WC qual
CHILE 4 (Zamorano 21, 85, Salas 75, Estay 83)
ECUADOR 1 (Alex Aguinaga 74)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,000. **Ref:** P Pena (Bol)
Chile: Tapia - Castaneda, Juan Gonzalez, Margas, Miranda, Musrri, Valencia (Estay 58), Vega (Sierra 76), Castaneda (Mora 68), Salas, Zamorano.
Ecuador: Morales - Tenorio (Luis Gonzalez 78), Rivera, Montano (Tenorio 46), Capurro, Ivan Hurtado, Obregon (Angel Fernandez 46), Carabali, Gilson de Souza, Alex Aguinaga, Eduardo Hurtado.

SUNDAY, JULY 7

Jul 7 - La Paz - WC qual
BOLIVIA 6 (Sandy 2, Etcheverry 41 pen, Baldivieso 61, Coimbra 67, Suarez 76, Paniagua 80)
VENEZUELA 1 (Tortolero 65 pen)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** J Da Rocha (Uru)
Bolivia: Trucco - Oscar Sanchez, Quinteros, Sandy, Rimba, Pena, Baldivieso, Castillo (Paniagua 75), Cristaldo, Etcheverry (Suarez 73), Coimbra (Moreno 68).
Venezuela: Dudamel - Filosa, MacIntosh, Tortolero, Hernandez (Diaz 46), Vera, Gonzalez, Hernandez, S Rivas (Urdaneta 46), Savarese (Miranda 46), Guerra.

Jul 7 - Barranquilla - WC qual
COLOMBIA 3 (F Asprilla 10, Valderrama 23, De Avila 77)
URUGUAY 1 (G Cedres 55)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** R Ruscio (Arg)
Colombia: Mondragon - Cabrera, Bermuudez, Mendoza, Moreno, Alvarez*, Serna, Valderrama, Rincon, F Asprilla, Aristizabal (De Avila).
* = *Alvarez sent off.*
Uruguay: Arbiza - Oliveira (Bengoechea), Aguirregaray, Moas, Lima, Pereyra*, Poyet, Dorta (Heberley Sosa), Sagarelli, G Cedres, Romero.
* = *Pereyra sent off.*

Jul 7 - Lima - WC qual
PERU 0
ARGENTINA 0
Att: 45,000. **Ref:** W. de Souza Mendonca (Bra)
Peru: Balerio - Reynoso, Olivares, Jose Soto, Carranza (Farfan 84), Solano, Jayo Legario, Maestri, Palacios, De Andrade, Zegarra (Alex Magallanes 68).
Argentina: Burgos - R Ayala, Chamot, Zanetti, Almeyda, Sensini, Cannigia (Pablo Paz 75), Simeone, Ortega (Gustavo Lopez 90), Morales (Bassedas 46), Balbo.

Jul 7 - Narva - Baltic Cup
ESTONIA 1 (U Rooba 35)
LATVIA 1 (Bulders 16)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** M Dilda.
Estonia: Poom - Lindmaa, Hohlov-Simson, Lemsalu, U Rooba, Alonen, M Rooba (Kristal 79), T Kallaste, Zelinski (Reim 85), Kirs, Oper (Rajala 79).
Latvia: Laizans - Troitski, Astafjev*, Zemlinski, Dolgopolov (Stepanov 45), Zakrevski, Ivanov, Zelberfins (Jelisejev 46), Stolcers, Babicev (Tarassov 76), Bulders.
* = *Astafjev sent off 72.*

MONDAY, JULY 8

Jul 8 - Narva - Baltic Cup
LITHUANIA 2 (Razanuaskas 5 pen, Zdancius 68)
LATVIA 1 (Jelisejev 44)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 250. **Ref:** M Saar (Est).
Lithuania: Martinekas - Ziukas, G Zutautas, Zudys, Stonkus, Razanauskas (Gividys 46), Stumbrys (Miknevicius 77), Mikalajunas (*Vencevicius 87), R Zutautas, Zvingilas, Fomenka (Zdancius 46).
* = *Vencevicius sent off 89.*
Latvia: Laizans - Troitski*, Stepanov, Zemlinski, Jelisejev (Tarassov 70), Blagonadezdin, Ivanov, Zelberlins (Monjak 65), Stolcers, Babicev, Bulders.
* = *Troitski sent off 73.*

TUESDAY, JULY 9

Jul 9 - Narva - Baltic Cup
ESTONIA 1 (Reim 21 pen)
LITHUANIA 1 (Zvingilas 18)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 350. **Ref:** M Braga (Lat).
Estonia: Poom - U Rooba, Lemsalu, Hohlov-Simson, T Kallaste (Rajala 88), M Rooba, Reim, Alonen (Oper 24), Zelinski (Kristal 46), Kirs, Meet (Lindmaa 74).
Lithuania: Martinekas - Ziukas, G Zutautas, Zudys (Miknevicius 55), Stonkus, Gvildys (Razanauskas 42), Stumbrys, Mikalajaunas, R Zutautas, Zvingilas (Fomenka 89), Zdancius (Morinas 79).

Jul 9 - Singapore - Asian Cup qual
SINGAPORE 2 (V Selvaraj 51, 65)
THAILAND 2 (S Natipong 69, S Kiatisuk 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,000

Jul 9 - Singapore - Asian Cup qual
BURMA 4 (Myo Hliang Win 10, 90, Maung Maung Oo 78, 85)
MALDIVES 1 (Ibrahim Rasheed 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000

SUNDAY, JULY 14

Jul 14 - E Rutherford, New Jersey - All-Star Match
BRAZIL 2 (Bebeto 48, Roberto Carlos 78)
FIFA ALL-STARS XI 1 (Klinsmann 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 78,416. **Ref:** Brizio Carter (Mex)
Brazil: Dida - Ze Maria, Aldair, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos - Flavio Concelcao, Amaral (Ze Elias 67), Juninho, Rivaldo - Bebeto, Savio (Ronaldo 67).
FIFA XI: Campos (Tapia 46) - Matthaus, Harkes (Fernando Couto 46), Hierro (Zelic 46), Fish (Balakov 46), Desailly (Fish 85) - M Laudrup (Abedi Pele 46), Redondo, Ginola - Klinsmann, Kazu Miura (Weah 46).

FRIDAY, JULY 19

Jul 19 - Damascus - Asian Cup qual
SYRIA 3 (Abdulatif Al-Helu 17, Ali Sheikh Deeb 48, Assaf Khalifa 76 pen)
QATAR 1 (Salem Enezi 58)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

OTHER MATCHES

JUNE 2: UNIV. DE CHILE 0 LANUS (Arg) 3.

JUNE 20: COLO COLO (Chile) 1 TOLUCA (Mex) 0.

JULY 4 (AUXERRE): AUXERRE 2 (Tasfaout 16, Valois 71), FRANCE OLYMPIC XI 1 (Vairelles 71pen).- (URAWA): JAPAN OLYM XI 1 (Ito 22), GHANA OLYM XI 2 (Ahinful 57, 68).

JULY 7 (POMONA, NJ): SAUDI ARABIA OLYM XI 1 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO 1.- (QUERETARO): MEXICO OLYM XI 1 (Luis Garcia 45), HUNGARY OLYM XI 0.

JULY 10 (FLORIANOPOLIS): BRAZIL OLYM XI 5 (Bebeto, Rivaldo, Flavio Conceicao, Juninho, Ronaldo), DENMARK U21 1 (Degn 85).- (POMONA, NJ): NIGERIA OLYM XI 1 (Okocha 68 pen), SAUDI ARABIA OLYM XI 0.

JUL 11 (PASADENA): LOS ANGELES GALAXY 1 (Vasques 21), EL SALVADOR 1 (Escobar 35).- (PUY-EN-VELAY): LE HAVRE 2 (Ah Sylla 44, Poli 58), TUNISIA OLYM XI 1 (Jaidi 53).

CORRECTION . . . EURO UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP

Final - May 31
SPAIN 1 (Raul Gonzalez 42)
ITALY 1 (Inigo Idiakez og 12)
HT: 1-1. **90min:** 1-1. **Att:** 43,000
Italy won 4-2 on pens, after extra time

1996 INTERTOTO CUP

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard Liege	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
AaB Aalborg	4	3	0	1	7	5	9
VfB Stuttgart	4	2	0	2	8	4	6
Hapoel Haifa	4	0	2	2	7	12	2
Cliftonville	4	0	1	3	2	9	1

AALBORG 5 HAPOEL HAIFA 4, CLIFTONVILLE 0
STANDARD 3, HAPOEL HAIFA 1 CLIFTONVILLE 1,
STUTTGART 0 AALBORG 1, CLIFTONVILLE 1
STUTTGART 4, STANDARD 2 HAPOEL HAIFA 2,
AALBORG 1 CLIFTONVILLE 0, STUTTGART 0 STANDARD 2, STANDARD 1 AALBORG 0, HAPOEL HAIFA 0 STUTTGART 4

GROUP 2

Linzer ASK	4	4	0	0	11	1	12
Werder Bremen	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Djurgardens	4	2	0	2	15	4	6
Apollon Limassol	4	1	0	3	4	13	3
B68	4	0	0	4	2	15	0

APOLLON 0 WERDER 2, LINZER 2 DJURGARDENS 0, DJURGARDENS 8 APOLLON 0, B68 0 LINZER 4, APOLLON 4 B68 1, WERDER 3 DJURGARDENS 2, B68 0 WERDER 2, LINZER 2 APOLLON 0, WERDER 1 LINZER 3, DJURGARDENS 5 B68 1

GROUP 3

Orebro	4	3	1	0	12	6	10
FC Copenhagen	4	3	1	0	7	4	10
Maribor Branik	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Austria Wien	4	1	0	3	9	8	3
Keflavik	4	0	1	3	2	11	1

MARIBOR 3 AUSTRIA WIEN 0, OREBRO 3 KEFLAVIK 1, KEFLAVIK 0 MARIBOR 0, COPENHAGEN 2 OREBRO, AUSTRIA WIEN 6 KEFLAVIK 0, MARIBOR 0 COPENHAGEN 1, COPENHAGEN 2 AUSTRIA WIEN 1, OREBRO 4 MARIBOR 1, KEFLAVIK 1 COPENHAGEN 2, AUSTRIA WIEN 2 OREBRO 3

GROUP 4

Silkeborg	4	3	1	0	11	2	10
Zaglebie Lubin	4	2	2	0	5	1	8
Charleroi	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
SV Ried	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Conwy Utd	4	0	1	3	1	9	1

CHARLEROI 2 SILKEBORG 4, ZAGLEBIE 2 SV RIED 1, CONWY UTD 0 CHARLEROI 0, SILKEBORG 0 ZAGLEBIE 0, SV RIED 0 SILKEBORG 3, ZAGLEBIE 3 CONWY UTD, CONWY UTD 1 SV RIED 2, CHARLEROI 0 ZAGLEBIE 0, SV RIED 1 CHARLEROI 3, SILKEBORG 4 CONWY UTD 0

GROUP 5

Nantes	4	3	1	0	12	0	10
Lillestrom	4	3	0	1	11	4	9
Heerenveen	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Kaunas	4	1	0	3	4	10	3
Sligo Rovers	4	0	2	2	3	8	2

KAUNAS 1 LILLESTROM 4, SLIGO 0 HEERENVEEN 0, LILLESTROM 4 SLIGO 0, NANTES 3 KAUNAS 1, HEERENVEEN 0 LILLESTROM 1, SLIGO 3 NANTES 3, KAUNAS 1 SLIGO 0, NANTES 3 HEERENVEEN 1, LILLESTROM 2 NANTES 3, HEERENVEEN 3 KAUNAS 1

GROUP 6

Segesta Sisak	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
Orgryte	4	2	2	0	8	2	8
Lucerne	4	2	0	2	4	5	6
Rennes	4	1	1	2	5	5	4
Hapoel Tel-Aviv	4	0	0	4	1	10	0

HAPOEL TEL AVIV 0 RENNES 2, ORGRYTE 3 LUCERNE 0, LUCERNE 2 HAPOEL TEL-AVIV 0, SEGESTA SISAK 1 ORGRYTE 1, HAPOEL TEL-AVIV 1 SEGESTA SISASK 3, RENNES 1 LUCERNE 2, ORGRYTE 3 HAPOEL TEL-AVIV 0, SEGESTA SISAK 2 RENNES 1, RENNES 1 ORGRYTE 1, LUCERNE 0 SEGESTA SISAK 1

GROUP 7

Rotor Volgograd	4	3	0	1	12	5	9
Basel	4	2	1	1	14	7	7
Antalyaspor	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Shaktyor Donetsk	4	1	1	2	5	8	4
Ataka-Aura Minsk	4	1	0	3	2	13	3

MINSK 0 ROTOR 4, BASEL 2 SHAKTYOR 2, ANTALYASPOR 2 BASEL 5, SHAKTYOR 1 MINSK 2, MINSK 0 ANTALYASPSOR 0, ROTOR 4 SHAKTYOR 1, ANTALYASPOR 2 ROTOR 1, BASEL 5 MINSK 0, SHAKTYOR 1 ANTALYASPOR 0, ROTOR 3 BASEL 2

GROUP 8

Kamaz Chelny	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
Munich 1860	4	2	0	2	8	3	6
Kaucuk Opava	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Spartak Varna	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
LKS Lodz	4	0	1	3	1	12	1

KAMAZ 3 LKS LODZ 0, SPARTAK VARNA 2 MUNICH 1960 1, KAUCUK 1 KAMAZ 2, LKS LODZ 1 SPARTAK VARNA 1, SPARTAK VARNA 0 KAUCUK 1, MUNICH 1860 5 LKS LODZ 0, KAMAZ 2 SPARTAK VARNA 2, KAUCUK 0 MUNICH 1860 2, MUNICH 1860 0 KAMAZ 1, LKS LODZ 0 KAUCUK 3

GROUP 9

Karlsruhe	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Univ. Craiova	4	3	0	1	7	3	9
Spartak Trnava	4	2	1	1	11	3	7
Daugava Liepaja	4	1	0	3	4	12	3
Cukaricki	4	0	0	3	2	11	0

SPARTAK TRNAVA 3 CUKARICI 0, UNIV. CRAIOVA 3 DAUGAVA 0, DAUGAVA 0 SPARTAK TRNAVA 6, KARLSRUHE 1 UNIV. CRAIOVA 0, CUKARICKI 1 DAUGAVA 3, SPARTAK TRNAVA 1 KARLSRUHE 1, KARLSRUHE 3 CUKARICKI 0, UNIV. CRAIOVA 2 SPARTAK TRNAVA 1, DAUGAVA 1 KARLSRUHE 2, CUKARICKI 1 UNIV. CRAIOVA 2

GROUP 10

Lierse	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
Vasas Budapest	4	2	1	1	9	5	7
FC Groningen	4	1	2	1	7	5	5
Gaziantepspor	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Narva Trans	4	0	1	3	2	11	1

GRONINGEN 1 GAZIANTEPSPOR 1, VASAS 2 LIERSE 0, NARVA TRANS 1 GRONINGEN 4, GAZIANTEPSPOR 3 VASAS 2, LIERSE 1 GAZIANTEPSPOR 0, VASAS 4 NARVA TRANS 1, GRONINGEN 1 VASAS 1, NARVA TRANS 0 LIERSE 3, LIERSE 2 GRONINGEN 1, GAZIANTEPSPOR 0 NARVA TRANS 0

GROUP 11

Ekaterinburg	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
CSKA Sofia	4	2	1	1	8	4	7
Strasbourg	4	1	3	0	4	2	6
Kocaelispor	4	1	1	2	7	9	4
Hibernians	4	0	0	4	5	13	0

HIBERNIANS 1 EKATERINGBURG 2, KOCAELISPOR 1 CSKA 3, CSKA 4 HIBERNIANS 1, STRASBOURG 1 KOCAELISPOR 1, HIBERNIANS 0 STRASBOURG 2, EKATERINBOURG 2 CSKA 1, KOCAELISPOR 5 HIBERNIANS 3, STRASBOURG 1 EKATERINBOURG 1, CSKA 0 STRASBOURG 0, EKATERINBOURG 2 KOCAELISPSOR 0

GROUP 12

Guingamp	4	3	1	0	6	2	10
Zemun	4	3	0	1	8	6	9
Jaro	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
D. Bucharest	4	1	0	3	4	6	3
Kolkheti Poti	4	0	0	4	3	10	0

JARO 0 GUINGAMP 0, ZEMUN 2 D. BUCHAREST 1, D. BUCHAREST 0 FARO 2, KOLKHETI POTI 2 ZEMUN 3, JARO 2 KOLKHETI POTI 0, GUINGAMP 2 D. BUCHAREST 1, KOLKHETI POTI 1 GUINGAMP 3, ZEMUN 3 JARO 2, GUINGAMP 1 ZEMUN 0, D. BUCHAREST 2 KOLKHETI POTI 0

UEFA CUP

PRELIMINARY RND - 1ST LEG

(JULY 17 UNLESS STATED)

BARRY TOWN (Wal) 0
DINABURG (Lat) 0
Att: 2,500 (*JUL 18*). **Ref:** Pratas (Por)
Barry Town: Ovendale - T Evans, Lloyd, French, York, Norman, Barnett, Loss (Ryan 80), Bird, Jones, C. Evans (Pike 62).
Dinaburg: Diguliev - Glozovs, Zizilevs (Smirnovs 58), Isakovs, Pogodins, Burlakovs, Fedotovs, Shmykov, Karachauskas, Tarasovs, Vaushev (Zhaboronkovs 74).

ST PATRICKS ATHLETIC (Rep Ire) 3 (Glynn 44, McDonnell 74, O'Flaherty 64)
SLOVAN BRATISLAVA (Slovak) 4 (Karasy 77, Maixner 18, Nemeth 10, 40)
Att: 4,500 (*JUL 18*). **Ref:** Timo Keltanen (Hol)
St Patricks: McKenna - Burke, Reilly (Campbell 83), McDonnell, Lynch, Gormley, Osam, Crolly, Glynn, Moody (O'Flaherty 45), Morristoe.
Slovan: Molnar - Stupala, Nemeth, Sobana (Juriga 65), Tinder, Tittel, Pecko (Slovak 45), Tomaschek, Gomes, Faktor, Maixner (Karasy 65).

IA AKRANES (Ice) 2
SILEKS (Mac) 0
HT: 1-0

ANORTHORSIS (Cyp) 4
SHIRAK GYUMRI (Arm) 0
HT: 0-0

BECEJ (Yug) 0
MURA (Sloven) 0
Att: 4,000

BEITAR JERUSALEM (Isr) 3 (Saloi 17, R Harazi 21, Pishont 43)
FLORIANA (Mal) 1 (Nanad Yeselji 55)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 11,000

BOHEMIANS (Rep Ire) 1 (Swan 1)
DINAMO MINSK (Bye) 1 (Makovski 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,000 **Ref:** V J Equinos-Torres (Spa)
Bohemians: Henderson - Prizeman (Ryan 72), Mullen, Best (T. Byrne 68), O'Driscoll, McGrath, Mooney*, O'Connor, Swan, Hanrahan, Parks (Dully 65). * = *Mooney sent off, 18mins.*
Dinamo Minsk: Varivontchik - Insrovitch, Iostrovski, Jouravel, Volodenrova (Dovnar 50), Lavrik, Tcherniavski*, Makovski, Makarenko (Shavrov 45), Matovski, Podrez (Ostrikov 75). Subs Not Used: Sedorovitch, Michtchihin.
* = *Tcherniavski sent off, 66mins.*

CROATIA ZAGREB (Cro) 4 (Sliskovic 25, Krznar 42, Cvitanovic 53, 79 pen)
TIRANA (Alb) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,000

DINAMO-93 MINSK (Bye) 3
TILIGUL TIRASPOL (Mol) 1
HT: 1-0

HAKA (Fin) 2 (Ristila 56, 80)
FLORA (Est) 2 (Rooba 22, Leetmaa 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,645

HIT GORICA (Sloven) 0
VARDAR (Mac) 1 (Trajcev 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,000

HUTNIK KRAKOW (Pol) 9 (Romuzga 37, 67, Wojnecki 65, 74, Zajac 70, 73, Yahaya 29, Shypovski 85pen, Jamroz 90)
KHAZRI BUZOVNA (Aze) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000

FC JAZZ (Fin) 3 (Suikkanen 38, Leivo-Jokimaki 49, Piracala 77)
GOTU IF (Far) 1 (Heinason 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,190

JEUNESSE (Lux) 2 (Ganser 31, Theis 43)
LEGIA WARSAW (Pol) 4 (L Pisz 4, T Sokolowski 39, Stanier 41, 60)
HT: 2-3. **Att:** 1,500

LANTANA (Est) 2 (Bragin 60, Gruznov 79)
VESTMANNAEYJA (Ice) 1 (T Gudmunsson 58)
HT: 0-0.

MACCABI HAIFA (Isr) 0
PARTIZAN BELGRADE (Yug) 1 (Svetlavic 10)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000

NEFTCHI BAKU (Aze) 2 (Rzaev 57, Vakhabzade 79)
LOKOMOTIV SOFIA (Bul) 1 (Borisov 7)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000

NEWTOWN (Wal) 1 (Brown 90)
SKONTO RIGA (Lat) 4 (Astafev 36, 71, Lovanyov 75, 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,000 **Ref:** J Arceo (Spa)

PORTADOWN (NI) 0
VOJVODINA (Yug) 1 (Cilinsek 27)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** R Olsen (Nor)
Portadown: Keenan - Major, Davidson, Casey, Strain, Stewart, Carlyle, Peebles, Haylock, Russell (Candlish 50), Kennedy.
Vojvodina: Zilic - Saraba, Grujic, Dunderski, Milosevic (Stojak 85), Bjegovic, Ilic, Cilinsek, Racic (Lerinc 66), Milosevski, Djurkovic (Milicevic 90).

PYUNIK YEREVAN (Arm) 3 (Arsen Avetisian 23, 53, Mchitarian 74)
HJK HELSINKI (Fin) 1 (Lechtinen 43)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,500

SANDOYAR (FI) 1 (Hentze 34 pen)
APOEL NICOSIA (Cyp) 5 (A Soteriou 5, 26, Fasouliotis 11, A Alexandrou 36, 68)
HT: 1-4. **Att:** 297

SLAVIA SOFIA (Bul) 4 (Panayotov 30, 67 pen, Totev 40, Pramatarov 85)
INKARAS-GRIFAS (Lit) 3 (Marchulevichus 7, 15, 76)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 4,000

**SLIEMA WAN

WORLD SERVICE

RIVER PLATE WIN LIBERTADORES CUP . . . JAPANESE

LIBERTADORES CUP

JUNE 20 - CALI, COLOMBIA

FINAL, 1ST LEG

AMERICA (Col) 1 (De Avila 26)
RIVER PLATE (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** O. Velazquez (Par).
America: Cordoba, Cardona (Hernandez 57), Bermudez, Asprilla, Mazziri, Cabrera, Berti, Oviedo, Escobar, De Avila, Zambrano.
River Plate: Burgos, H. Diaz, Ayala, Rivarola, Altamirano, Almeyda, Astrada (sent off 54), Sorin, Ortega (Gallardo 80), Francescoli (Gomez 86), Crespo (Lavallen 65).

JUNE 26 - BUENOS AIRES

FINAL, 2ND LEG

RIVER PLATE (Arg) 2 (Crespo 7, 59)
AMERICA (Col) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 75,000 **Ref:** J. Matto (Uru).
River Plate: Burgos, H. Diaz, Ayala, Rivarola, Altarmirano, Escudero (74 Gomez), Almeyda, Cedres, Ortega (88 Sorin), Francescoli, Crespo (Gallardo 86).
America: Cordoba, Bermudez, Asprilla, Dinas, Cabrera, Berti, Mazziri, Escobar, Oviedo, Zambrano, De Avila.
River Plate won 2-1 on agg

ARGENTINA

WEEK ENDING JUNE 24

PLATENSE 2 (Coria 35, 88)
ESTUDIANTES DE LA PLATA 2 (Craviotto 1, Palermo 47)

RACING 3 (C. Lopez 27, 54, Cocca 31 og)
FC OESTE 0

BOCA JUNIORS 3 (Caniggia 55, Tchami 58, 89)
BANFIELD 2 (Cruz 67, Baena 82)

HURACAN 2 (R. Flores 17, Peletti 61)
DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 0

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE LA PLATA 1 (Sanguinetti 73)
VELEZ SARSFIELD 1 (Posse 82)

NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 2 (Gabrich 27, Gimenez 53)
ROSARIO CENTRAL 0 - *SUSPENDED 67M, CROWD TROUBLE.*

COLON DE SANTA FE 2 (Cuberas 35, Gambier 90 pen)
BELGRANO CORDOBA 1 (Tosello pen 89)

ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 2 (Lauria Calvo 47, Quinteros 82)
SAN LORENZO 0

INDEPENDIENTE 3 (Alvez 34, Burruchaga pen 64, 84)
GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE JUJUY 2 (Trimarchi 48, Morales Santos 57)

WEEK ENDING JULY 1

ROSARIO CENTRAL 0
BOCA JUNIORS 1 (Fabbri 67)

RACING 0
LANUS 1 (Di Carlo 86)

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE JUJUY 2 (Morales 12, Guerrero 80)
HURACAN 4 (Guerra 33, Fabbro 51, Barijho 77, N. Fernandez 87)

SAN LORENZO 0
INDEPENDIENTE 2 (Acuna 87, Alvez 90)

BELGRANO CORDOBA 1 (Artime 22)
ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 0

BANFIELD 1 (Cruz 9)
GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE LA PLATA 2 (F. Fernandez 26, G. Barros Schelotto 82)

VELEZ SARSFIELD 2 (Roman og 32, Herrera 84)
COLON SANTA FE 0

RIVER PLATE 0
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 0

ESTUDIANTES DE LA PLATA 0
FERRO CARRIL OESTE 0

DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 1 (Grondona 68)
PLATENSE 0

WEEK ENDING JULY 7

LANUS 2 (Simionato pen 69, Di Carlos 72)
RIVER PLATE 2 (Altamirano 30, Medina Bello 50)

WEEK ENDING JULY 15

GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE LA PLATA 4 (Albornoz pen 28, Senguinetti 42, F. Fernandez 57, Pereyra 68)
ROSARIO CENTRAL 0

ARGENTINOS JUNIORS 0
VELEZ SARSFIELD 0

LANUS 1 (Schurrer 46)
ESTUDIANTES DE LA PLATA 0

PLATENSE 1 (Coria 82)
GIMNASIA Y ESGRIMA DE JUJUY 0

INDEPENDIENTE 1 (Burruchaga 62)
HURACAN 4 (Barijho 49, Barrios 58 pen, Flores 76, Guerra 94)

BOCA JUNIORS 4 (Basualdo 44, 49, 64, Caniggia 76)
RIVER PLATE 1 (Amato 87)

SAN LORENZO 1 (Almandoz 28)
BELGRANO CORDOA 0

NEWELL's OLD BOYS 1 (Gimenez 13)
RACING CLUB 0

FERRO CARRIL OESTE 1 (Lorenzo 3)
DEPORTIVO ESPANOL 1 (Castillo 52)

COLON SANTA FE 2 (Kuzemka 38, Agoglia 53)
BANFIELD 0

NATIONAL DIVISION CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Velez Sarsfield	16	9	6	1	34	16	33
Lanu	16	10	3	3	33	20	33
Gimnasia La Plata	16	10	2	4	35	19	32
Boca Juniors	16	10	2	4	28	22	32
Estudiantes	16	8	5	3	28	18	29
Racing Club	16	7	5	4	24	17	26
Huracan	16	6	7	3	27	24	25
Rosario Central	16	6	5	5	23	28	23
River Plate	16	6	2	8	31	30	20
Independiente	16	5	5	6	21	24	20
Dep. Espanol	16	4	7	5	16	18	19
Colon Santa Fe	16	5	4	7	16	19	19
Platense	16	6	1	9	20	25	19
Belgrano Cordoba	16	5	3	8	20	24	18
Ferro Oeste	16	3	8	5	12	19	17
Gimnasia Jujuy	16	5	2	9	19	35	17
Newell's Old Boys	16	3	7	6	18	24	16
San Lorenzo	16	4	4	8	13	21	16
Banfield	16	3	5	8	19	22	14
Argentinos Jnrs	16	2	3	11	10	30	9

Bottom relegation position (average pts over last three seasons - bottom two relegated): Banfield 0,891; Espanol 0.881; Gimnasia Jujuy 0.876; FC Oeste 0.863; Colon Sta fe 0,857; Belgrano 0.855; Argentinos Juniors 0.819.

BRAZIL

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP – RIO DE JANEIRO 2ND STAGE (FINAL)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Tot
Flamengo	11	8	3	0	27	7	27	58
Vasco	11	7	3	1	17	2	24	51
Botafogo	11	6	5	0	25	8	23	42
Fluminense	11	5	2	4	17	11	17	37
Olaria	11	5	1	5	17	21	16	22
Madureira	11	3	4	4	9	16	13	20
Volta Redonda	11	3	2	6	8	12	11	21
Americano	11	2	4	5	8	17	10	24
Bangu	11	1	7	3	6	13	10	22
Itaperuna	11	2	3	6	13	18	9	25
Barreira	11	2	3	6	11	21	9	17
America	11	2	3	6	9	21	9	22

Flamengo won both stages to make final play-off unnecessary.

URUGUAY

FIRST DIVISION OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP - FINAL

1) Penarol 23pts; 2) Defensor Sporting 22; 3) Nacional 21; 4) Danubio 19; 5) Huracan 18; 6) Rampla Juniors 14: 7) River Plate, Wanderers 11; 9) Liverpool 10; 10) Cerro, Sud America 8; 12) Central 6.

ECUADOR

FIRST DIVISION (OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Emelc	16	11	1	4	38	13	34
Nacional	16	9	5	2	22	13	32
Barcelona	14	8	3	3	22	7	27
Dep. Quito	16	7	6	3	27	19	27
Cuence	16	6	6	4	20	11	24
Olmedo	16	7	2	7	18	22	23
Espoli	16	5	6	5	19	21	21
Liga Univ Quito	16	5	3	8	21	25	18
Tecnico Univ.	15	5	3	7	16	32	18
Green Cros	15	5	1	9	12	29	16
Aucas	16	2	5	9	12	22	11
Univ. Catolica	16	3	1	12	15	42	10

CHILE

FIRST DIVISION - (AFTER 14 GAMES)

1) Colo Colo 32pts (one game les); 2) Cobreloa, Palestino 24; 4) Coquimbo, Universidad de Chile (one game less), Universidad Catolica 23; 7) Antofagasta 21; 8) Wanderers, Concepcion, Huachpato 19; 11) Audax Italiano 18; 12) temuco 16; 13) Osorno 13; 14) Atacama 12; 15) O'Higgins 10; 16) Union Espanola 9.

COLOMBIA

FIRST DIVISION FINALS

Semi-finals (including bonus points obtained in regular season)

GROUP A: 1) America 12.75; 2) Deportivo Cali 11; 3)Union Magdalena 10; 4) Caldas 5.50.
GROUP B: 1) Millonarios 12; 2) Nacional 9.75; 3) Deportes Tolima 7.50; 4) Atletico Junior 7.
FINAL ROUND: 1) Deportivo Cali 12 (4 bonus pts); 2) Millonarios 12; 3) Nacional, America 5.

JAPAN

YAMAZAKI NABISCO CUP

SATURDAY, 1 JUNE 1996

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Raudnei 33)
BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 1 (Seki 64) Att: 9,254

URAWA REDS 1 (Fuknaga 89)
KASHIWA REYSOL 3 (Watanabe 32, og 60, Edilson 68) Att: 20,230

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 1 (Histra 57)
JUBILO IWATA 0 Att: 11,468

YOKOHAMA MARINOS 2 (Miura 56, 77)
GAMBA OSAKA 3 (Isogai 15, 52 pen, Gillhaus 18) Att: 9,552

CEREZO OSAKA 0
VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Bismarck 30) Att: 13,389

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 0
AVISPA FUKOKA 1 (Troglio 50) Att: 9,964

NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 1 (Hirano 50)
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 1 (Zinho 16) Att: 21,713

SHIMIZU S-PULSE 1 (Oenoki 55)
KASHIMA ANTLERS 0 Att: 15,039

WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE

YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 1 (Moriyama 83)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 1 (Zinho 19) Att: 8,065 (Agg: 2-2)

KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Leonardo 35 pen, 69)
SHIMIZU S-PULSE 2 (Oliva 59, Hasegawa 84 Att: 15,330 (Agg: 2-3)

VERDY KAWASAKI 3 (Gen 24, 70, Nunobe 42)
CEREZO OSAKA 0 Att: 7,502 (Agg: 4-0)

KASHIWA REYSOL 2 (Nozomu Kato 42, Edilson 63)
URAWA REDS 0 Att: 9,348 (Agg: 5-1)

JUBILO IWATA 1 (Nakayama 41)
SANFRECCE 0 Att: 8,354 (Agg: 1-1)

GAMBA OSAKA 1 (Matsuyama 66)
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 1 (Yamada 79) Att: 7,114 (Agg: 4-3)

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 3 (Teruo Iwamoto 3, Seki 50, Natsuka 69)
KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Raudnei 23 pen) Att: 8,107 (Agg: 4-2)

AVISPA FUKUOKA 0
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 2 (Maslovar 40, Hiroyama 57) Att: 6,227 (Agg: 1-2)

SATURDAY, 8 JUNE

YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 0
SHIMIZU S-PULSE 1 (Nagai 58) Att: 10,839

URAWA REDS 0
BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 0 Att: 19,287

JUBILO IWATA 3 (Nanami 23, Fujita 30, Schillaci 89)
GAMBA OSAKA 1 (Gillhaus 12) Att: 13,150

AVISPA FUKUOKA 0
KASHIMA ANTLERS 0 Att: 9,125

KASHIWA REYSOL 0
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 0 Att: 12,768

CEREZO OSAKA 3 (Kawamae 7, Kurata 75, Kanda 83)
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 3 (Inagaki og 55, Maslovar 69, Kawamae og 71) Att: 2,218

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 0
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 1 (Abe 29) Att: 6,827

VERDY KAWASAKI 4 (Kitazawa 4, Bismarck 12, Nunobe 37, Caico 41)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0 Att: 14,208

WEDNESDAY, 12 JUNE

YOKOHAMA MARINOS 3 (Miura 9, Matsuda 44, Biconti 50)
KASHIWA REYSOL 1 (Edilson 75) Att: 8,280 (Agg: 3-1)

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 1 (Betinho 36)
URAWA REDS 2 (Boli 50, Fukuda 78) Att: 7,893 (Agg: 1-2)

GAMBA OSAKA 0
JUBILO IWATA 5 (Vanenburg 30, Nakayama 34, 89, Takeda 35, Okura 71) Att: 5,421 (Agg 1-8)

SHIMIZU S-PULSE 3 (Sawanobori 11, Hasegawa 60, Nagai 81)
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 3 (Maezono 24, 69, Satsukawa 64) Att: 14,949 (Agg: 4-3)

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 0
KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 0 Att: 4,331 (Agg: 1-0)

KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Yanagisawa 48, Leonardo 82)
AVISPA FUKUOKA 0 Att: 14,915 (Agg: 2-0)

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 2 (Hasek 11, Jo 79)
CEREZO OSAKA 0 Att: 6,042 (Agg: 5-3)

NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0
VERDY KAWASAKI 3 (Nunobe 24, Fujiyoshi 87, Ishizuka 88) Att: 23,637 (Agg: 0-7)

SATURDAY, 15 JUNE

KASHIWA REYSOL 2 (Wagner 24, Sakai 87)
JUBILO IWATA 1 (Schillaci 65) Att: 11,276

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 1 (Nakata 66)
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 1 (Bisconti 67) Att: 10,451

YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 5 (Yamaguchi 16, Maezono 32, 48, Zinho 64, Cesar Sampaio 89)
VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Caico 79 pen) Att: 11,820

CEREZO OSAKA 0
KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Leonardo 4, Kurosaki 43) Att: 9,978

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Raudnei 53)
URAWA REDS 1 (Boli 31) Att: 14,992

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 1 (Kubo 84)
GAMBA OSAKA 1 (Matsuyama 21) Att: 4,105

SHIMIZU S-PULSE 3 (Massao 22, Nagai 31, Oliva 55)
AVISPA FUKUOKA 1 (Maradona 89) Att: 13,079

NAGOYA GRAMPUS 1 (Stojkovic 70 pen)
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 1 (Ejiri 89) Att: 21,172

WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE

AVISPA FUKUOKA 0
SHIMIZU S-PULSE 1 (Hasegawa 80) Att: 6,519 (Agg: 1-4)

URAWA REDS 0
KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Toshihiro Yamaguchi 37) Att: 18,742

YOKOHAMA MARINOS 0
BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 3 (Teruo Iwamoto 8, Paulinho 53, 57) Att: 8,717 (Agg: 1-4)

JUBILIO IWATA 1 (Katsuya 64)
KASHIWA REYSOL 1 (Careca 36) Att: 9,160 (Agg: 2-3)

GAMBA OSAKA 0
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 3 (Moriyasu 37, Kubo 47, Michiki 50) Att: 5,074 (Agg: 1-4)

KASHIMA ANTLERS 0
CEREZO OSAKA 3 (Manoel 6 pen, Nishizawa 19, Yokoyama 89) Att: 15,292 (Agg: 2-3)

VERDY KAWASAKI 3 (Caico 56, Kitazawa 59, Kurihara 87)
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 1 (Zinho 44) Att: 11,431 (Agg: 4-6)

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 1 (Hasek 69)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0 Att: 6,023 (Agg: 2-1)

SATURDAY, 22 JUNE

YOKOHAMA MARINOS 2 (Matsuda 14,Zapata 16)
URAWA REDS 0 Att: 13,476

KASHIWA REYSOL 2 (og 29)
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 2 (Huistra 21, Kuwabara 68) Att: 8,003

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 1 (Natsuka 89)
JUBILO IWATA 3 (Vanenburg 50, Takeda 76, Nakayama 82) Att: 10,069

GAMBA OSAKA 4 (Matsunami 18, 31, og 57, Morioka 76)
KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 3 (Toshihiro Yamaguchi 72, Matsuhashi 84, Okuma 89) Att: 8,519

SHIMIZU S-PULSE 2 (Nagai 50, 69)
CEREZO OSAKA 1 (Narciscio 61) Att: 15,401

KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Kurosaki 6, Mazinho 30)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0 Att: 15,612

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 0
VERDY KAWASAKI 2 (Kitazawa 23, Bismarck 71) Att: 15,515

AVISPA FUKUOKA 1 (Ishimaru 5)
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 1 (Yoshiro Moriyama 46) Att: 10,085

WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE

YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 4 (Yamaguchi 14, Maezono 35, Zinho 69 pen, Cesar Sampaio 89)
AVISPA FUKUOKA 1 (Maradona 58 pen) Att: 4,503 (Agg: 5-2)

CEREZO OSAKA 0
SHIMIZU S-PULSE 1 (Sawanobori 76) Att: 5,677 (Agg: 1-3)

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 1 (Oki 2)
KASHIWA REYSOL 3 (Careca 39, 44, Shimotaira 50 (Agg: 3-4)

JUBILO IWATA 2 (Kojima og 9, Hattori 89 pen)
BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 1 (Paulinho 66) Att: 8,696 (Agg: 5-2)

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Raudnei 77)
GAMBA OSAKA 2 (Skrinjar 43, Matsunami 62 Att: 8,508 (Agg: 4-6)

NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0
KASHIMA ANTLERS 2 (Leonardo 26, Masuda 89) Att: 19,929 (Agg: 0-4)

URAWA REDS 2 (Okano 78, Fukuda 89)
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 1 (Bisconti 89) Att: 18,914 (Agg: 2-3)

VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Nunobe 37)
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 2 (Jo 61, Niimura 76) Att: 6,862 (Agg: 3-2)

SATURDAY, 29 JUNE

URAWA REDS 1 (Fukuda 3 pen)
JUBILO IWATA 2 (Nakayama 62, Schillaci 78) Att: 20,324

YAMAZAKI NABISCO CUP RESULTS AND TABLES . . . 1996 AFRICAN CLUB COMPETITIONS RESULTS . . .

KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Raudnei 49)
YOKOHAMA MARINOS 3 (Zapata 22, Nagayama 75, Omura 82 pen) Att: 10,726

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 2 (Kubo 33, Huistra 58)
BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 3 (Paulinho 19, Seki 81, 89) Att: 7,470

GAMBA OSAKA 1 (Gillhaus 41)
KASHIWA REYSOL 4 (Date 38, Valdir 62, Arima 66, Nozom Kato 85) Att: 5,323

SHIMIZU S-PULSE 2 (Oliva 20,58)
NAGOYA GRAMPUS EIGHT 0 Att: 19.283

YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 2 (Hattori 20, Yamaguchi 21)
JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 3 (Hasek 17, 40, Sandro 79) Att: 8,787

AVISPA FUKUOKA 2 (Murata og 48, Takemoto 66)
CEREZO OSAKA 2 (Nishizawa 44, Yonekura 89) Att: 6,358

VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Argel 78)
KASHIMA ANTLERS 1 (Ishii 9) Att: 22,874

WEDNESDAY, 3 JULY

JUBILO IWATA 2 (Nakayama 66, Vanenburg 73 pen)
URAWA REDS 2 (Fukuda 53, Boli 86) Att: 11,832 (Agg: 4-3)

BELLMARE HIRATSUKA 3 (Seki 15, 51, Paulinho 83)
SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA 0 Att: 7,178 (Agg: 6-2)

KASHIWA REYSOL 2 (Watanabe 22, Edilson 53)
GAMBA OSAKA 0 Att: 6,062 (Agg: 6-1)

YOKOHAMA MARINOS 0
KYOTO PURPLE SANGA 1 (Toshihiro Yamaguchi 66) Att: 8,159 (Agg: 3-2)

KASHIMA ANTLERS 1 (Muroi 65)
VERDY KAWASAKI 1 (Nunobe 57) Att: 15,594 (Agg: 2-2)

JEF UNITED ICHIHARA 1 (Hasek 83)
YOKOHAMA FLUGELS 5 (Yamaguchi 4, 49, Denilson 58, Zinho 75, 84 Att: 6,169 (Agg: 4-7)

NAGOYA GRAMPUS 6 (Okayama 4, 68, Hirano 7, 42, Frankowski 75, Moriyama 84)
SHIMIZU S-PULSE 1 (Oliva 69) Att: 19,283 (Agg: 6-3)

CEREZO OSAKA 8 (Nishizawa 1, 11, Yonekura 27, Narciscio 36, Kanda 43, Marquinhos 52, Morishima 70, 77)
AVISPA FUKUOKA 1 (Chikara Fujimoto 81) Att: 5,771 (Agg: 10-3)

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kashiwa Reysol	10	6	2	2	19	10	12
Jubilo Iwata	10	6	2	2	20	10	10
Bellmare	10	4	3	3	17	12	9
Yokohama Marinos	10	3	3	4	13	13	9
Sanfrecce	10	4	2	4	11	12	7
Gamba Osaka	10	3	2	5	13	25	6
Kyoto PS	10	2	3	5	10	15	3
Urawa Reds	10	2	3	5	9	15	3

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shimizu S-Pulse	10	7	2	1	17	13	12
Verdy Kawasaki	10	6	2	2	20	10	10
Yokohama Flugels	10	3	4	3	23	16	10
JEF Utd Ichihara	10	5	2	3	15	15	9
Kashima Antlers	10	4	4	2	12	8	7
Cerezo Osaka	10	2	2	6	17	17	6
Nagoya Grampus	10	1	3	6	9	18	4
Avispa Fukuoka	10	1	3	6	7	23	9

● 3 points for an aggregate win, 1 point for an aggregate draw.

1996 AFRICAN CHAMPIONS CUP

PRELIMINARY ROUND

TOFFA (Ben) 0
MIGHTY BAROLLE (Lib) 0
Toffa refused to play second leg

ST GEORGE (Eth) 1 (Zeriyhun Shengeta 41)
SUNSHINE (Sey) 0

SUNSHINE 2 ST GEORGE 1
Agg: 2-2, St George win on away goals

BOAVISTA PRAIA (CVI) *walkover* v
ASC SONALEC (Mauritania) *disqualified*

FACA (CAR) 0 FANTASTIQUE (Bur) 4
FACA withdraw from second leg

POSTEL 2000 (Chad) 2
CHEMINOTS (Con) 0

CHEMINOTS 1 POSTEL 2000 1
Postel 2000 win 3-1 on agg

FOBAR (Mad) 0
MBABANE HIGHLANDERS (Swa) 0

MBABANE HIGHLANDERS 2 FOBAR 1
Highlanders win 2-1 on agg

ST DENIS (RI) 7
MAJANTJA (Les) 0

MAJANTJA 1 ST DENIS 3
St Denis won 10-1 on agg

EXPRESS (Uga) 1 (Fidy Rasanoarivo 67 og)
SUNRISE SC (Mauritius) 0

SUNRISE 3 EXPRESS 1
Sunrise won 3-2 on agg

YOUNG AFRICANS (Tan) 1
APR FC (Rwa) 0

APR FC 3 YOUNG AFRICANS 0
APR won 3-1 on agg

TOWNSHIP ROLLERS (Bot) 2
BLACK AFRICA (Nam) 1

BLACK AFRICA 4 TOWNSHIP ROLLERS 0
Black Africa won 5-2 on agg

FIRST ROUND

CS SFAXIEN (Tun) *walkover* v
MIGHTY BAROLLE *withdrew*

AL HILAL (Sud) 0
ST GEORGE (Eth) 0

ST GEORGE 1 (G. Motebainore 79) **AL HILAL 0**
St George won 1-0 on agg

COD MEKNES (Mor) 1 (Brahim Adda 44)
SEMASSI SOKODE (Togo) 0

SEMASSI SOKODE 2 (Amedblamie Kossi 7, Djidelou Ganiou 85)
COD MEKNES 1 (Abdejlil Hadda 63)
Agg: 2-2, COD Meknes won on away goals

ASFA YENNENGA (BF) 1 (Idrissa Braga 27 pen)
GOLDFIELDS (Gha) 4 (Samy Adjei 6, Koffi Debra 22, 89, Abetia Aryeh 35)

GOLDFIELDS 1 (Koffi Debrah 32)
ASFA YENNENGA 1 (Ismael Koudou 44)
Goldfields won 5-2 on agg

JS KABYLIE (Alg) 2 (Hakim Boubrit 36, Mahieddine Meftah 70)
BOAVISTA PRAIA 0

BOAVISTA PRAIA 1 (Nelo 34)
JS KABYLIE 2 (Hadj Adlane 3, 44)
JS Kabylie won 4-1 on agg

RACING BAFOUSSAM (Cam) 1 (Yves Kalamen 60)
FANTASTIQUE 1 (Pascal Kabade 89)
Fantastique walkover v Racing Bafoussam (did not arrive for the second leg)

ASEC ABIDJAN (IC) 4 (Ibrahim Muri 44, 76 pen, Ali Marin Keita 72, Florent Baloki 89)
POSTEL 2000 0

POSTEL 2000 0 ASEC ABIDJAN 1 (Bamba 72)
ASEC won 5-0 on agg

DIARAF DAKAR (Sen) 0
KALOUM STARS (Gui) 0

KALOUM STARS 1 (Abubakari Camara 55)
DIARAF DAKAR 1 (Djibril Cissokho 7)
Agg: 1-1, Diaraf won on away goals

SHOOTING STARS (Nig) 4 (Kalu Umar 15, 22, 28, Patrick Paschal 57)
MANGASSPORT (Gab) 0

MANGASPORT 2 (Francis Ongagna 38, Hughes Saifou 87)
SHOOTING STARS 1 (Ajibade Babalade 89)
Stars won 5-2 on agg

DYNAMOS (Zim) 1 (Makuwinji Soma-Phiri 38)
GOR MAHIA (Ken) 0

GOR MAHIA 0 DYNAMOS 1 (M. Soma-Phiri 89)
Dynamos won 2-0 on agg

MUFULIRA WANDERERS (Zam) 3 (Martin Kafwimbi 20, Bilton Musonda 38, 88)
MBABANE HIGHLANDERS 0

MBABANE 0 MUFULIRA WAND 1 (Musungu 78)
Wanderers won 4-0 on agg

ORLANDO PIRATES (SA, holders) 2 (Bruce Ramokadi 28, Mark Fish 82)
ST DENIS (RI) 0

ST DENIS 3 (Tsimba Razafinitianolina 13, 42, Jacky Vidot 80)
ORLANDO PIRATES 2 (Jerry Skosana 48, 56)
Pirates won 4-3 on agg

ZAMALEK (Egy) 3 (Mohamed Sabri 7 pen, Ahmed El Kass 71 pen, Kamel Kaci Said 89)
SUNRISE SC 1 (Fidy Rasaonaivo 55 pen)

SUNRISE 2 (Eric Remi 38, Daniel Moonsamy 80)
ZAMALEK 1 (Hussain Abdellatif 44)
Zamalek won 4-3 on agg

DESPORTIVO MAPUTO (Moz) *walkover* v
CAPE TOWN SPURS (SA) *withdrew*

AS BANTOUS (Zai) 1 (Kalondo Mutapayi 53)
APR FC 0

APR FC 2 (Nsengiyumva 72, 89) **AS BANTOUS 0**
APR FC won 2-1 on agg

PETRO ATLETICO (Ang) 2 BLACK AFRICA 0

BLACK AFRICA 1 (McDonald Naobeb 85)
PETRO ATLETICO 1 (Fernando Franciso 65)
Petro win 3-1 on agg

1996 AFRICAN CUP-WINNERS CUP

PRELIMINARY ROUND

MOGAS 90 (Ben) *walkover* v
AS AIR MAURITANIE (Mauritania) *disqualified*

RAYON SPORT (Rwa) 3
ETHIOPIA INSURANCE CORPORATION 1

ETHIOPIA IC 3 RAYON SPORT 1
Agg: 4-4, Rayon Sport won 5-4 on pens

RED STAR (Sey) 0
ST LOUISIENNE (RI) 0

ST LOUISIENNE 2 RED STAR 1
St Louisienne won 2-1 on agg

NOTWANE (Bot) 2
MHLAMBANYATSI ROVERS (Swa) 0

MHLAMBANYATSI ROVERS 0 NOTWANE 2
Notwane won 4-0 on agg

MP TIGERS (Nam) 1
REAL ROVERS (Les) 2

REAL ROVERS 1 MP TIGERS 2
Agg: 3-3, Tigers won 4-1 on pens

FIRST ROUND

ASKO KARA (Togo) 2 (Dovi Akon 23, 89)
STADE ABIDJAN (IC) 1 (N'zue N'Guessan 36' pen)

STADE ABIDJAN 4 (Salisfou Diarrasouba 10, Didier Yoroba 18, Kan Servais Konan 40, 63)
ASKO KARA 1 (Basile Kodjovi 75)
Stade Abidjan won 5-3 on agg

FUS RABAT (Mor) 5 (Vassili Postnov 5, Lahsen Anaflous 12, 89, Aziz Lagraoui 44, Abdelilah Bakhti 77)
MOGAS 90 0

MOGAS 90 1 (W. Cocou 15) **FUS RABAT 0**
FUS Rabat won 5-1 on agg

CANON YAOUNDE (Cam) 1 (Martin Mbenty 76)
ASCOT (Chad) 0

ASCOT 0 CANON YAOUNDE 1 (Paul Essono 30)
Canon won 2-0 on agg

OLYMPIC BEJA (Tun) 6 (Zied Youzbachi 3, Hedi Mokrani 39, Nabil Bechaouch 60, 70, Nabil Kouki 82, Maher Sdiri 85)
ASF BOBO-DIOLASSOU (BF) 0

ASF BOBO-DIOLASSOU 1 (Ibrahim Kamou 87)
OLYMPIC BEJA 2(Nabil Kouki 53, Nabil Bechaouch 63)
Olympic won 8-1 on agg

DOUANES (Sen) *walkover* v
GREAT OLYMPICS (Gha) *withdrew*

CR BELOUIZDAD (Alg) 5 (Ahmed Chebaba 33, Moussa Ishak Ali 49, 55, 84, Mohamed Talis 51)
HOROYA (Gui) 2 (Souleymane Conte 37, Mohamed Camara 89)

HOROYA (Gui) 2 (Keita 38, Mohamed Camara 89)
CR BELOUIZDAD 0
CR Belouizdad won 5-4 on agg

AS AVIACAO (Ang) 1 MBILINGA (Gab) 1

MBILINGA 4 (Francis Koumba 2, Nguta Wamba 10, 47, 82)
AS AVIACAO 2 (Felisberto Carmelino 6, Baptista Avelino 85)
Mbilinga won 5-3 on agg

ETOILE DU CONGO 2 (Lucien Ibarra 39, 89)
KATSINA UNITED (Nig) 3 (Djibril 48, 87, Odjo 83)

KATSINA UTD 0 ETOILE DU CONGO 1
(MATCH *ABANDONED DUE TO FLOODLIGHT FAILURE*)
Tie awarded to Etoile du Congo

CHAPUNGU (Zim) 0
SIMBA (Tan) 1 (Thomas Kipese 88)
Chapungu withdrew from second leg

ARAB CONTRACTORS (Egy) 2 (Tamer 1-Nahas 67, Aly Achour 74)
RAYON SPORT 1 (Claude Kalisa 71)

RAYON SPORT 0 ARAB CONTRACTORS 0
Arab Contractors won 2-1 on agg

PRETORIA CITY (SA) 5 (Ronald Lawrence 18, Andrew Tucker 19, Nicky Shaw 73, Lawrence Maake 88, Matthew Inskip 89)
ST LOUISIENNE 0

ST LOUISIENNE 1 (Boubacar Seck 9)
PRETORIA CITY 3 (Nicky Shaw 29, Clyde Mah

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Soccer Cities **AMSTERDAM**

Gavin Hamilton on the suburban superdome that could propel Ajax Amsterdam to superpower status

WHEN Ajax Amsterdam play host to Milan in a pre-season friendly on August 14, there will be no fans at De Meer Stadion, the club's modest 19,000-capacity home since 1934. Nor will there be any at the city's decaying Olympisch Stadion, where until last season Ajax entertained European cup opponents.

Instead they will be at the Amsterdam Arena, the club's new high-tech, space-age stadium in the south-east suburbs of the city, to usher in another era in the history of Amsterdam football.

Originally planned as part of the unsuccessful bid for the 1992 Olympics, the 52,000-seat council-owned Arena is a futuristic superdome, complete with retractable roof and underground car park with room for 2,600 cars.

Ajax will pay rent to the council for use of the stadium and adjacent training facilities, which include a new youth development centre. The total cost of the new stadium has been estimated at 240 million guilders, about £80m. The cost has been met by the local council, the national lottery, a loan from Ajax sponsors ABN-AMRO bank and individual investors, who include Philips, Coca-Cola and Grolsch.

That PSV Eindhoven owners Philips have a stake in the new project is an indication that football won't be the only entertainment available at the Arena. Ajax will share the stadium with the Amsterdam Admirals gridiron football team as well as visiting rock bands.

It is a stadium fit for the 21st century and a worthy stage for the world club champions. Yet much of what Ajax have achieved since Rinus Michels introduced the world to 'total football' in the late 1960s has been possible precisely because the club has not been one of European football's superpowers. Instead, the Ajax system has created an environment where youthful talent has flourished at the expense of egos and star personalities.

The danger is that, with the move to the Arena and the resulting superpower status that is likely to bring, the character of the club will be changed for ever. As coach Luis Van Gaal admitted to *WORLD SOCCER* earlier this year: "The most important aspect of the move to the new stadium will be to keep the culture of the club friendly and open. It will be difficult."

Ajax fans have had no such reservations. The club have sold 47,000 season tickets. They could have sold a lot more, but 5,000 seats had to be held back for visiting fans.

The interest in the new stadium is not surprising, especially given Ajax's success of recent years, although in the postwar era Amsterdammers have held an indifferent attitude towards football.

When Johan Cruyff returned to Ajax from Barcelona in 1981, average attendances at De Meer more than doubled. They had dipped to an average of 9,765 in 1979-80, despite the phenomenal success of the 1970s.

The move to the new stadium offers 'two fingers' to Ajax's great rivals from Rotterdam, Feyenoord. Amsterdammers can now look forward to regular appearances from the Dutch national side at the Arena. Stadium officials are also hoping to pip Rotterdam to the staging of the European Championship Final in 2000. Holland last played in Amsterdam, at the Olympic stadium, in March 1992 against Yugoslavia. The switch from Feyenoord's De Kuip stadium was temporary, enforced because of hooligan trouble in Rotterdam.

Ajax's traditional fan base – Jewish and wealthier than Feyenoord's more working-class following – has been augmented over the years by support from throughout Holland.

The success of Ajax contributed in no small part to the collapse into amateur obscurity in 1983 of FC Amsterdam, the city's other club. At one time there were four professional outfits in Amsterdam. Ajax have always been the most successful, though; the first of their 26 League titles was won in 1918. In those days the club played at Oude Stadion on the southern outskirts of the city, which was shared with other local clubs such as Blauw Wit. Oude was demolished in 1928 to make way for a new stadium on a site 300 yards away, built for that year's Olympic Games. The 1928 Olympics was the last tournament before the World Cup established itself as football's world championship. Uruguay and Argentina dominated, with the Uruguayans winning gold in a final replay.

Ajax moved on to De Meer in 1934, while the city's other clubs, Blauw Wit, De Volewijckers and DWS (Door Wilskracht Sterk or Strong by Willpower) stayed at the Olympic stadium.

The three clubs struggled in the shadow of their more illustrious rivals, although De Volewijckers were champions in 1944 and DWS won the title in 1964 and reached the Champions Cup quarter-finals the following season. In 1972 the trio succumbed to a growing trend in Dutch football when they merged to form FC Amsterdam.

The new club continued to play at the Olympic stadium, and achieved a notable scalp in the 1974-75 UEFA Cup when they beat Internazionale 2-1 in Milan. But the merger was not proving popular with fans and in 1983, the three component clubs went their own ways. They still operate to this day in Holland's myriad amateur leagues, but attract no more than a few hundred spectators.

The Olympic stadium struggled through the 1980s into the 1990s, a crumbling relic of a bygone era. Amsterdam Council's 50-year lease ran out in 1987, plunging the stadium's future into doubt. Ajax maintained facilities on a very basic level to enable the club to use the stadium for European cup ties, but their departure for the new Arena signalled the end.

With property developers hovering, an action group launched a campaign to save the stadium. The builders will still move in, but they will have to build around, behind and even beneath the pitch, stands and terracing. The end terrace extensions, built in 1935 to increase the capacity to 60,000, will be demolished, but the original structure which hosted the 1928 Olympics will be preserved. There is even talk of staging future athletics events there.

The De Meer was not so lucky. Amsterdam Council has taken control of the ground as part of the deal which financed the Arena development. They plan to build a social housing project on the ground where the likes of Cruyff, Neeskens, Rijkaard and Van Basten once played and trained.

Ajax's departure from De Meer left the thorny issue of what to do with the turf from the pitch. Instead of flogging off pieces to fans, the club has donated 180 square metres of the pitch (roughly the size of a penalty area) to the city's Westgaarde cemetery. Die-hard fans can now have their ashes scattered on the De Meer pitch, next to a plaque in the club's colours.

The club may have deserted De Meer for a deluxe, high-tech future in the suburbs, but there will be a corner of an Amsterdam cemetery that is forever Ajax.

Deserted . . . the Olympic stadium and (inset) De Meer Stadion

Space-age stadium . . . the new Amsterdam Arena

'The club may have deserted De Meer for a deluxe, high-tech future in the suburbs, but there will be a corner of an Amsterdam cemetery that is forever Ajax'

Scheming for success

THE move to the new stadium has not dented Ajax's faith in youth. In fact, the club's new youth development centre, on a site next to the new Amsterdam Arena, is called 'De Toekomst', meaning, literally, the future.

The list of famous graduates of the Ajax academy has been well documented, as has the club's propensity to let their best assets move abroad. Edgar Davids and Michael Reiziger are the latest exports from Amsterdam to join Italy's Serie A. Patrick Kluivert could join them at Milan next summer and Bobby Robson, it has been suggested, is only keeping the manager's seat at Barcelona warm for Louis Van Gaal to fill when his contract with Ajax ends next year.

The person with the longest contract at Ajax is Co Adriaanse, the director of youth. Adriaanse, a former schoolteacher, is one of four club directors – the others are Van Gaal and the commercial and financial directors – and he oversees the youth programme.

For Ajax, continuity is everything. The club run 10 youth teams, from under-nines through to under-17s. Each squad has 16 players and the same 3-4-3 formation – three defenders, a diamond formation in midfield, two wingers and a central striker – is adopted by teams throughout the club.

The coaching philosophy is embodied in the acronym TIPS – Technique, Intelliegnce, Personality, Speed – although scouts are told to look for the reverse acronym SPIT and the club believe they can improve the intelligence and technique of players through coaching. Players are scouted within a 90km radius of Amsterdam from the age of seven. The club believe eight to 12 is the optimum age for learning technical skills.

Youngsters take part in at least four training sessions a week, but rarely play a conventional match. Instead they are taught about such diverse subjects as diet, nutrition and dealing with the media. Parents are encouraged to take an interest, but are told not to interfere – hence the 'SILENCE' sign at training sessions and matches.

Tennis balls are used to develop technique; fitness coaches take aerobics sessions to improve balance and co-ordination; and specialist coaches work with individual players to improve specific skills, such as heading.

Until now, the club's progessive approach has been phenomenally successful. However, the move to the new stadium, and the resultant demands from the 48,000 success-hungry season ticket-holders, is about to provide Ajax with their biggest test yet.

Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

Praise Terry, but don't worship him

There is no way to bribe or twist Thank God, the British journalist. But seeing what the man will do Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

HUMBERT WOLFE's barbed lines recurred to me in the days that followed the recent European Championship finals, when it became quite plain that if Terry Venables hadn't won the tournament, he had certainly won the propaganda battle.

Mind you, reading the public prints, you might have been excused for believing he had won the World Cup. Critics and columnists fell over themselves to eulogise him, to weep tears, and not even crocodile tears, over the prospect of his departure.

The wretched Conservative Party, putting on, about the same time, their screamingly unfunny double act of Heseltine and dour Mawhinney, might, one felt, have done wonderfully well to hire Terry as their spin doctor, in opposition to Labour's Peter Mandelson. And Mandelson, after all, doesn't have Scribes West at his disposal.

Sooner or later there had to be a corrective, or a counterblast, and it duly came in the *Daily Mail* from Richard Littlejohn, whose column expresses the views, essentially, of the combative and disenchanted fan. Littlejohn lashed into Venables and those who had been eulogising him, wrote scathingly rather than euphemistically of England's performance in Euro 96 and altogether did something to restore the balance, by going so far over the top, himself.

About all this, and Terry too, my conscience is quite clear. Even when England were playing junk football in the Umbro Cup a year earlier, I never deviated from my expressed belief that they could win the Euro; if only by default. Which, indeed, they could well have done.

Despite the fact that their relative success, and the flood of patriotic fervour it engendered – why, we even had good old ex-feminist, self-publicist Germaine Greer and woman novelist AS Byatt coming out of their intellectual closet to enthuse – it wasn't much of a tournament. Such genuine experts as Giovanni Trapattoni, now back with Bayern Munich as their manager, turned up their noses at it.

Germany won it when they might so easily have gone out to Italy, when the ineffable referee Goethals allowed Andreas Kopke to stay on the field after he had brought down Gigi Casiraghi.

But let us look, analytically, at what England did. They struggled against the Swiss, and were ultimately lucky to get a draw. They were enormously lucky that Gary McAllister missed that penalty for Scotland; and indeed that Seaman, their true hero, twice rescued them in that game. The Scots were a sterile, mediocre team, who were hardly worth a draw, but they might easily have got one. England then surpassed themselves against a Dutch team in a state of crisis, weakened by injuries, and by the sending home of Edgar Davids.

So to Spain who, quite frankly, were cheated. With Paul Ince, such an irreplaceable force in midfield, suspended, and the useful Jamie Redknapp injured, Venables surely blundered when he gave David Platt the central midfield role beside Paul Gascoigne.

Platt's strength, when fully fit and operative – and it is arguable that he has been neither since he returned from Italy – is to burst unexpectedly into the danger area, to score with foot or head. No chance of his doing that from so deep a position, and since he is neither schemer nor tackler, what was to be expected of him?

Spain, especially when Javier Clemente belatedly brought on Jose Caminero in the second half, ruled the midfield. They didn't win, first because Julio Salinas's first-half goal was so dubiously ruled out for offside, secondly because when Paul Gascoigne brought down another impressive substitute, Alfonso, in the box, the bizarre French referee, Batta, booked Alfonso for shamming!

So to the semis against Germany, when the luck finally ran out. You might say that this was scarcely a time to gamble. To which I'd reply that, given so many injuries, it was a gamble NOT to gamble. A gamble, that is to say, to use Platt again in a midfield position, in front of a risky three-man defence – so lacking in pace – rather than to use the likes of Sol Campbell either in midfield or at the back. After all, why pick players at all if you aren't going to use them, even under such circumstances?

Poor Platt rashly lost the ball to set the Germans on their way to their equalising goal; though the defence was then penetrated with alarming ease, a centre-back, in Thomas Helmer, making the killer pass.

England, in the end, were probably unlucky to go out on spot kicks, and I had every sympathy with Gareth Southgate, who at least had the guts to take that sixth kick. If you can reproach him with anything, it must be for the errors against Switzerland (weak header, leading to that penalty); Scotland, getting under that cross which Durie headed; and Holland, letting Bergkamp in with a poor attempt at getting the ball back to the keeper, which were all redeemed by the remarkable Seaman.

But had Jurgen Klinsmann been fit and able to play, do you think the English defence could have survived the 90 minutes? I certainly don't.

There may be a tendency now – it's already been apparent – to use Venables to clobber Glenn Hoddle. It should be resisted. I repeat what I've already written in this column. All you need to be a good international manager is . . . to be a good international team manager. What experience did Franz Beckenbauer have?

I HAVE just changed papers in Italy; from being correspondent of *Corriere dello Sport* of Rome to working for *Tuttosport* of Turin.

It was as a 17-year-old that I began to write for *Corriere*, a newspaper I shall always regard with huge affection and gratitude. Happy memories!

Not least of that extraordinary 1954-55 season when I was living in Rome and for the only time in their history, both Roma (Jesse Carver) and Lazio (Geoge Raynor) had an English manager.

What plots and strategems little Raynor, later to take Sweden to the 1958 World Cup Final, had to overcome! And what loyalty was shown to me by *Corriere*'s football editor, Giuseppe Melillo, whom I still meet, as he eats quietly in a corner of my favourite little Roman restaurant. Memories, too, of the infinitely precise Vittorio Finizio, my translator before I could write Italian; sensitive, educated, an historian of his native Naples.

Last year someone whom I'd never met, a Florentine, Mario Sconcerti, became the editor. From that day to this, over six months in all, I've never heard a word from him.

Not long ago, Sconcerti was up in arms when *Corriere* was accused of manufacturing a story by Zdenek Zeman, dour manager of Lazio. Sconcerti was incensed. He's always, he wrote, been a paragon of correttezza; correctness.

Always? What's that old Italian saying: *Tutto e relativo*. Everything's relative. Including correctness, it seems.

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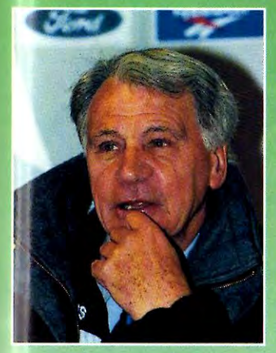

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